

Success in Climate Talks



The first conference of the Kyoto Protocol Countries was a success.

At the end of the Conference that was held in Montreal from November 28 to December 9, 2005, the countries had agreed to more than 40 decisions on the Kyoto Protocol and the Climate Convention, including:

- a compliance regime for the Kyoto Protocol;
- the formal start of Joint Implement and Clean Development;
- a five-year action plan of adaptation to climate change and the modalities of a fund to help the least developed countries adapt to climate change;
- the start of “a process to consider further commitments” for developed nations beyond 2012. A working group will start to work on this in May 2006. More than 150 countries participate, but not USA. The mandate of the group unfortunately lacks a clear end date for negotiations; as such, 2008 was proposed by many NGOs;
- in parallel, an exploratory global “dialogue” on future steps to combat climate change without “negotiations leading to new commitments.” USA will participate in this dialogue.

One of the key issues during the negotiations was the reluctance of the USA to make any meaningful commitments on emission reductions. While the solution was the above-mentioned double approach, another possible way around the “US problem” would be to expand the Kyoto Protocol to include cities, states and other non-status actors such as multinational corporations. This was discussed at the conference, but no formal agreement was made.

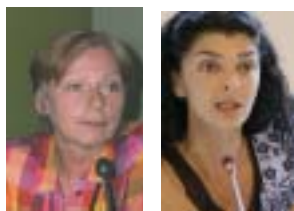


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Montreal Marked a “New Era” for Gender and Climate

Report sent from Montreal by Ulrike Roehr (left) and /Minu Hemmati (right).



Gender & Climate exhibition booth in Montreal.

Learning from experiences at COP 10 in Buenos Aires, when two side events on gender and climate change did not attract as much as interest as anticipated, this year’s women’s events at UNFCCC COP11/MOP1 marked a ‘new era’.

A variety of different activities were organised to draw more attention to gender aspects in climate change. This strategy was based on three pillars:

- Awareness-raising and disseminating information via an exhibition booth ‘gender - justice - climate’ and two ‘Climate Talk’ events,
- Women’s meetings to build capacity and strategise on how to integrate gender, and
- A research workshop aiming to develop a future research agenda and to initiate a gender-and-climate-change network.

Awareness-Raising

A growing interest in gender aspects of climate change became evident at the booth: many participants took away lots of material. Not all, but some of them were really interested in learning more, asked in-depth questions and engaged in discussion. Although there are some gender-differentiated results of research and experiences, e.g., from climate-change adaptation projects and especially from community-based disaster management, there is a conspicuous lack of good practise. Therefore, one of the ‘lessons learnt’ from these discussions should be to work towards a compilation of good practises/projects. As the article is written during the COP, reactions to the ‘Climate Talk’ events cannot be reported yet. They will take place at the second to last day of the conference. ‘Climate Talks’ are web-cast via the UNFCCC website and are intended to explain specific issues to the broader public. This year’s common theme for all talks is “Time for Action”. In our view, this can be interpreted as a call for gender mainstreaming into the negotiations. And that’s why we asked for



two slots. One talk was to be given by the authors of the article focusing on some examples of why it makes a difference to address gender in climate change. The other one, given by the chairs of the ‘Network of Women Ministers for the Environment’ (Swedish Minister for the Environment, Lena Sommestad, and South African Deputy Minister for Environment and Tourism, Rejoice Mabuda-Fahsi) about actions in their countries.

Capacity-Building and Strategising

The strategy meetings also generated a lot of interest. In the first meeting, participants expressed their need for clarifying details of the UNFCCC process, and we focused on discussing the basics of the UNFCCC process and explaining some of the decisions that were on the agenda at COP11/MOP1. The lesson learnt from this situation is that a capacity-building workshop should be held before or at the very beginning of the next COP. However, by the second strategy meeting in the beginning of the second week of the conference, we worked on recommendations and demands that women would want to put to negotiators. Issues raised included the need to broaden the debate and place it firmly into the context of sustainable development, peace and justice, as well as raising the numbers of women on delegations and in decision-making positions. The group decided to work on a brief statement / position paper. For the next COP, we are planning to ask for a room for daily Women’s Strategy Meetings.

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Research Agenda

One starting point of the women's activities at COP11/MOP1 is that there are considerable gaps in research on gender and climate change that impact the ability of the global community to integrate gender aspects appropriately and effectively into developing policies and instruments for climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

The workshop was meant to bring together researchers working on gender and climate change and related issues to develop a research agenda that can be pursued over the coming years.

Because participants came from very different areas - not only research, but also from practise and from policy advocacy - it wasn't easy to find a common language and understanding of the problems. Some of us, having been involved in UN processes (CSD) for years, felt that gender is already sufficiently mentioned in the UN documents and that the great gap is in implementation. However, although gender is mentioned in many UN documents, it is completely absent in the UNFCCC as well as in the Kyoto Protocol.

In addition, gender is often only mentioned in a very general way and as such doesn't help to argue why it makes a difference to take gender into account, especially not in climate-change policies. Of course we know that poverty and domestic / reproductive work are the basis for most inequalities between the sexes, but this awareness is not enough. We have to link it to the particular situation, to the specifics of the issues. Hence, what we need to know and need to provide are 'hard facts' and in-depth case studies relating the real-life 'stories'. This information should convince those dealing with climate change that they will not succeed in mitigating climate change or in appropriate planning for adapting to climate change if they don't address gender aspects adequately.

The most needed types of data include gender-differentiated information from North and South about consumption behaviour (energy use and emissions) as well as impacts on health, and in relation to risks. Participants were aware that much of this information is already available - but 'hidden' in reports not primarily dealing with gender or climate.

The group concluded that it would be extremely useful to conduct a survey obtaining a comprehensive overview of available research relating to gender and climate change.



From the gender & climate meeting in Montreal.

Numerous questions for future research were raised during the workshop. They may serve as the basis for a 'bank of research questions' to link questions developed in practical projects to research projects to be developed by academia.

The questions discussed include: What's the impact of education on behaviour relevant to climate? What are the differentiated impacts of economic incentives vs. awareness-raising and education? What are the gender aspects of these different behaviour-change instruments?

Next Steps

Workshop participants agreed on several next steps: among others, requesting that the IPCC produce a report about existing research on gender and climate change, and the request for a comparative evaluation of mitigation and adaptation measures in different regions from a gender perspective.

Participants agreed that growing the network further with gender- as well as climate-change experts and researchers was useful. They also agreed that such a network could only survive with

a) network members' continued active participation, and

b) coordination / service to the network. Participants committed to participate actively in a growing network on gender and climate-change research, and they welcomed the organisers' commitment to provide the services required. LIFE e.V. will explore additional means for exchanging references to gender- and climate-change-related research - e.g., a web site and a mailing list providing space for exchange and discussion. A workshop report will be available soon.

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