

P7_TA-PROV(2012)0145

Women and climate change

European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2012 on women and climate change (2011/2197(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 March 2011 entitled ‘A Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050’ (COM(2011)0112),
- having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the United Nations Beijing +5, +10 and +15 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted respectively on 9 June 2000, 11 March 2005 and 2 March 2010,
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the UNFCCC Decision 36/CP.7 on Improving the participation of women in the representation of Parties in bodies established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol of 9 November 2001,
- having regard to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 18 September 2000,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2011 on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 November 2011 on the climate change conference in Durban (COP 17)²,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 September 2011 on developing a common EU position ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)³,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 February 2009 on ‘2050: The future begins today – Recommendations for the EU’s future integrated policy on climate change’⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2008 on Gender Equality and Women’s

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0515.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0504.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0430.

⁴ OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 44.

Empowerment in Development Cooperation¹,

- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A7-0049/2012),
- A. whereas climate change is not gender-neutral and does have gender-differentiated effects;
 - B. whereas consumption and lifestyle patterns have a significant impact on climate change;
 - C. whereas women represent approximately 50 % of the world's population and whereas they still have relatively more responsibility for everyday consumption choices, childcare and household activities; whereas consumption patterns differ between women and men, as women consume more sustainably than men and show greater willingness to act to preserve the environment by making sustainable consumption choices;
 - D. whereas due to gendered roles, women's impact on the environment is not the same as men's, and their access to resources and ways to cope and adapt is severely affected by discrimination in terms of income, access to resources, political power, education and household responsibility;
 - E. whereas climate change will amplify inequalities and there is a risk that climate change policies will also have a negative impact on gender balance and women's rights if they do not take gender discrimination into account from the very start;
 - F. whereas there will not be any climate justice without true gender equality, and whereas the elimination of inequalities and the fight against climate change should not be seen as contradictory;
 - G. whereas democracy, respect for human rights and equality of opportunity between men and women contribute to sustainable development and environmental protection;
 - H. whereas sources of discrimination and vulnerability other than gender (such as poverty, geography, traditional and institutional discrimination, race, etc.) all combine to obstruct access to resources and to means to cope with dramatic changes such as climate change;
 - I. whereas in some regions, almost 70 % of all employed women work in agriculture² and produce up to 90 % of some crops³, yet they are virtually absent from budget deliberations and climate change activities;
 - J. whereas, while 70 % of poor people living on less than USD 1 per day are women, women own less than 1 % of the world's property; whereas, compared with men, women in developing countries reinvest considerably more of their income in their families;

¹ OJ C 66 E, 20.3.2009, p. 57.

² FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11: Women in Agriculture – Closing the gender gap for development*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>.

³ World Economic Forum, *Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap*, 2005, https://members.weforum.org/pdf/Global_Competitiveness_Reports/Reports/gender_gap.pdf.

- K. whereas family planning can significantly improve maternity health and control over family size and ultimately increase the independence and reduce the workload of women who are still seen as primarily responsible for childcare, increasing the resilience of women and their families to climate change impacts, as indicated in the 20-year plan adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development;
- L. whereas environmental problems – caused and exacerbated by climate change – are currently responsible for the growth of forced migration, and whereas there is therefore an increasing link between asylum-seekers and areas of environmental decline; whereas there is a need for better protection and resettlement of ‘climate refugees’, and for special attention to be given to women who are most vulnerable;
- M. whereas between 75 and 80 % of the world’s 27 million refugees are women and children¹; whereas migrations induced by climate change will affect men and women differently and women often more severely; whereas special provisions regarding health, security and independence are necessary to reduce the vulnerability of women in these cases of forced or voluntary migration;
- N. whereas the proportion of women in political decision-making and especially in climate change negotiations is still unsatisfactory and little to no progress has been made; whereas women account for only 12 to 15 % of heads of delegation and around 30 % of the delegates;
- O. whereas two thirds of the world's illiterate persons are women² and access to information and training via appropriate communication channels is therefore critical to ensuring their independence and inclusion, in particular in cases of emergency such as natural disasters;
- P. whereas natural disasters have a major medium- and long-term effect on education, health, structural poverty and population displacement, and whereas children make up a group particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters; whereas there is a clear link between the occurrence of disasters and reductions in the level of school attendance, and whereas disasters exacerbate considerably the gender gap at school level;
- Q. whereas droughts and water shortages resulting from climate change force women to work more in order to provide water, food and energy, and whereas young people frequently abandon school to help their mothers in these tasks;
- R. whereas women are also powerful agents of change and are globally more active in civil society activities, and their full participation in every aspect of the fight against climate change would ensure fairer and more comprehensive and effective policies to tackle climate change, with regard to both adaptation and mitigation aspects;
- S. whereas, on account of their responsibilities when it comes to managing scarce natural resources, women acquire important knowledge regarding the need for a more sustainable environment, giving them a potential role to play – which should not be disregarded – in improving adaptation and attenuation strategies for climate change;

¹ UN, Ecosoc, ‘Women at a glance’, <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/women96.htm>.

² UNICEF, *Progress for Children*, 2005, <http://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2005n2/PFC05n2en.pdf>.

- T. whereas mechanisms or financing for disaster prevention, adaptation and mitigation will remain insufficient unless they incorporate women's full participation in design processes, decision making and implementation; whereas good practices from, for example, Tunisia, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras have demonstrated that women's knowledge and participation save lives through disaster management, boost biodiversity, improve water management, enhance food security, prevent desertification, protect forests and support public health;

General provisions

1. Recognising that climate change exacerbates gender discrimination in addition to its other catastrophic effects, emphasises that averting dangerous climate change must be the highest priority of the EU both in domestic and external policy;
2. Calls on the Commission and the Council, in order to ensure that climate action does not increase gender inequalities but results in co-benefits to the situation of women, to mainstream and integrate gender in every step of climate policies, from conception to financing, implementation and evaluation;
3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include – at all levels of decision-making – gender equality and gender justice objectives in policies, action plans and other measures relating to sustainable development, disaster risk and climate change, by carrying out systematic gender analyses, establishing gender-sensitive indicators and benchmarks and developing practical tools; underlines that the climate change negotiation process must take into account the principles of gender equality at all stages, from research and analysis to design and implementation and the development of mitigation and adaptation strategies;
4. Recalls that, in its 4th Assessment Report of 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed that the impact of climate change varies according to gender, age and class, with the poor being most likely to suffer the most; takes the view that achieving gender equality is key to human development and is a fundamental objective in the fight against poverty; demands that a gender-based approach be applied across the board in the drawing-up of development, human rights and climate change policies; calls for steps to be taken to ensure that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acts in accordance with human rights frameworks and with national and international agreements on gender equality and equity, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
5. Highlights the fact that climate change and its negative impacts should also be regarded as a development issue with gender implications that is relevant to all sectors (social, cultural, economic and political), from the local to the global level, and that concerted efforts are required by all stakeholders to ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction measures are gender-responsive, sensitive to indigenous people and respectful of human rights;
6. Welcomes the growing awareness of the gender aspect of climate change in the high-level climate talks, and interventions by high-level actors; stresses however the need to see concrete action to include more women ,in EU climate diplomacy, at all levels of decision-making and especially in climate change negotiations, by means of measures such as introducing 40 %+ quotas in the delegations;

7. Reminds the Commission and the Member States of its resolution on the climate change conference in Durban (COP 17), and urges them to act on its commitment to ‘strive for female representation of at least 40% in all relevant bodies’ for climate financing; underlines the need to apply this principle to technology transfer and adaptation bodies as well;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect country-specific and gender-disaggregated data when planning, implementing and evaluating climate change policies, programmes and projects, in order effectively to assess and address the differing effects of climate change on each gender and to produce a guide on adapting to climate change, outlining policies that can protect women and empower them to cope with the effects of climate change;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to mainstream gender-sensitive statistics in all environment-related policy areas, in order to improve the measurement of the general situation of women and men with regard to climate change;
10. Recalls that the inclusion in EU foreign policy of issues relating to the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination should continue to contribute to women playing a central role in decision-making, policy formation, the management, conservation and monitoring of natural resources and of the environment, and efforts to combat climate change;
11. Calls for a ‘climate-friendly’ indicator (as an alternative to GNP) to monitor how growth, consumption and lifestyle patterns influence climate change;
12. Calls on the EU and the Member States to assess to what extent climate-related policies take account of women’s needs, and urges them to apply a gender-based perspective when formulating gender-sensitive sustainable development policy;

Adaptation

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up easy-to-use tools for gender impact assessments of projects throughout project life-cycles, such as the tools used for development projects;
14. Calls for inclusive local solutions and projects, including built-in awareness of existing vulnerabilities and capacities to cope, such as the traditional experiences and knowledge of indigenous people, and in particular women;
15. Points out that women are globally very active at civil society level, and therefore calls on the Commission to facilitate and support the networking of women’s organisations and civil-society actors;
16. Calls on the Commission to envisage programmes whereby the transfer of modern technologies and know-how can help developing communities and regions adapt to climate change;
17. Points out that women play a crucial role in water abstraction and management in developing countries, as they are often the ones collecting, using and distributing water, not just in the home but also in farming; calls on the Commission to provide development aid

for accessible programmes to sink wells using renewable energy sources and simple, easy-to-maintain water treatment systems;

18. Calls for the integration of gender-aware capacity-building and training into adaptation solutions, which must be compatible with the special needs of women and take into account the specific obstacles, but also capabilities and experiences, of women;
19. Highlights the importance of relying on the knowledge of women and encouraging local solutions that have very concrete influence on people's daily lives, such as the project 'Girls in Risk Reduction Leadership' in South Africa, or several projects to help women's groups install drinking water facilities and toilets in Indian slums;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate the gender issue into strategies for preventing and managing the risks associated with natural disasters, and to promote women's empowerment and awareness through capacity-building before, during and after climate-related disasters, along with their active involvement in disaster anticipation, early warning systems and risk prevention as part of their role in resilience-building;
21. Notes that in many communities around the world, women's responsibilities in the family make them more vulnerable to environmental change, which is exacerbated by the impact of climate change; points out that they are being affected in their multiple roles as food producers and providers, caregivers and economic actors;
22. Calls for an increase in transparency and inclusiveness of existing mechanisms and planning processes, such as National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and future National Adaptation Plans, and for these principles to be promoted in future climate-related treaties, mechanisms and bilateral cooperation efforts;
23. Emphasises that there is strong evidence that the impact on health of climate-sensitive conditions, such as malnutrition, and the incidence of infectious diseases, such as malaria, varies according to gender; notes with concern the high female mortality rate in disaster situations; takes the view that more gender-specific research into the impact of climate change on women's health would help to achieve a more targeted response; calls on all governments to make more efforts to ensure better prevention, treatment and access to medicine and drugs – especially for women, as they are a vulnerable group, particularly in their capacity as care providers –, to commit to a series of actions aimed at addressing the health risks associated with climate change, and to provide a framework for gender-based health risk assessments and adaptation/mitigation measures in relation to climate change;
24. Underlines that 70 % of the world's poorest are women, who carry out two-thirds of all work done but own less than 1 % of all goods; notes that they are denied equal access to and control over resources, technology, services, land rights, credit and insurance systems and decision-making powers and are thus disproportionately vulnerable to, and affected by, climate change and have fewer opportunities to adapt; underlines that 85 % of people who die as a result of climate-induced natural disasters are women, that 75 % of environmental refugees are women, and that women are also more likely to be the unseen victims of resource wars and violence resulting from climate change;
25. Calls on the EU and its Member States to develop a principle of 'climate justice'; insists that the greatest injustice of our failure to tackle climate change effectively would be the detrimental effects on poor countries and populations, and on women in particular;

Mitigation

26. Calls on the Commission and the upcoming Presidencies of the Council of the European Union to launch a study focusing specifically on the gender dimension of mitigation policies;
27. Emphasises that targeted policies are needed to avoid gender-segregation and discrimination in the green economy, where new technology and science jobs are already almost exclusively male-dominated; stresses, in this connection, the importance of entrepreneurship in terms of opening up the green economy to both women and men;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage women to pursue technical and scientific training and careers in the environmental and energy technology sectors, since the need for expertise in this area will guarantee women secure jobs with a stable future and ensure greater awareness of women's needs when it comes to defining climate change policies;
29. Calls on the Commission to support a reform of existing mechanisms and funds to make them more transparent, inclusive and reflective of the contributions to emissions reductions by local communities and particularly women and to promote these principles in future climate-related treaties, mechanisms and bilateral cooperation efforts, with a view to developing better ways to ensure the economic empowerment of women;
30. Recognises that population growth has a climate impact, and highlights the need to respond adequately where the contraceptive needs of women and men in any society remain unmet;
31. Recalls that avoiding dangerous climate change and limiting the increase in average temperatures to 2° C, or 1.5° C if possible, compared with pre-industrial levels, is necessary and absolutely critical in order to avoid dramatic negative consequences for women and other vulnerable groups;
32. Calls on the Commission to set up a toolkit to encourage inclusive decision-making, as was done in the transport and energy sectors in Malmö (Sweden) and in the Vollsmose area (Denmark)¹;
33. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop indicators to evaluate the gender impact of projects and programmes and to promote gender budgeting in climate-related policies, whether these policies are conducted at international, national, regional or local levels;
34. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop tools and guidance for the gender analysis of mitigation policies and programmes, and related research programmes and activities;
35. Stresses the important role played by women in implementing mitigation measures in daily life, e.g. through energy- and water-saving practices, recycling measures and the use of eco-

¹ Gender mainstreaming in the public transportation policy in Malmö:
http://www.nikk.no/A+gender+equal+and+sustainable+public+transport+system.b7C_wljSYQ.ips;
and the project to train ethnic minority women to be environmental ambassadors in Vollsmose:
http://www.nikk.no/Women+are+everyday+climate+experts.b7C_wljQ1e.ips.

friendly and organic products, as they are still seen as the primary managers of these resources in the home; calls on the Commission to launch awareness-raising campaigns at the grassroots level, focusing on everyday consumption choices related to household and childcare activities;

36. Acknowledges, therefore, the significant contribution women can make to successful innovation through their capacity to educate others, both in business and in household management;
37. Underlines, in this connection, the importance of strengthening the active participation of women in innovation for sustainable development as a means of tackling the serious challenges posed by climate change;
38. Points out that climate change will inevitably lead to migration from regions affected by calamities such as droughts or floods, and that the EU must keep in mind the need to protect women in any camps set up for internally displaced persons and refugees;
39. Notes that the impact of environmental change on migration and displacement will increase in the future and that, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 80 % of the world's refugees are women and children; reiterates the importance of identifying gender-sensitive strategies for responding to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change; takes the view, therefore, that urgent research is required on how to manage environmental migration in a gender-sensitive manner – this includes recognising and responding to gender roles and responsibilities in the area of natural resources and may include ensuring that scarce resources are available to communities in need and that water is provided for refugees;

Financing

40. Calls on the EU delegations to respect the principle set out in its aforementioned resolution on the climate change conference in Durban (COP 17), to ensure that gender balance in all climate finance decision-making bodies is guaranteed, including the Green Climate Fund Board and possible sub-boards for individual funding windows;
41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes and strategies that use gender analysis to improve the welfare of women and girls and take into account gender inequalities in access to credit, information, technology, land, natural resources, sustainable energy and reproductive health information and services; calls for such programmes and strategies to include innovative financing solutions such as micro-credit schemes, in particular in emergency cases such as those of climate refugees;
42. Stresses the need for financing mechanisms to reflect women's priorities and needs, and for the active involvement of organisations that promote gender equality in the development of funding criteria and the allocation of resources for climate change initiatives, particularly at local level and in the activities of the Green Climate Fund;
43. Calls for the integration of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in all climate funds and instruments; stresses that this integration requires gender expertise and should extend to the mission, governance and operational modalities of such financing mechanisms, and that operational modalities and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should ensure that

women and local communities benefit from adequate funding;

44. Calls on the Commission and the EU delegations to support scaled-up, new and additional funding particularly for adaptation actions which directly benefit women, who are often disproportionately vulnerable to climate change impacts; calls for the provision of such adaptation funding to be exclusively in the form of grants;
45. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the development of renewable energy sources in developing countries, through transfers of technology and knowledge which involve the balanced participation of women, with a view to contributing simultaneously to both equal opportunities and climate change mitigation;
46. Points out with concern the negative impact climate change may have on the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular those linked to the condition and protection of women;

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47. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.