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COP of (in)action with some promising developments on gender–

GenderCC's & LIFE's joint statement on COP22

The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016 – two days before COP22. This was much faster than expected, but it was made possible when the crucial threshold of 55 countries which together account for at least 55 % of global greenhouse gas emissions was reached in a timely manner. Before it took place, COP22 was been given the hopeful title “COP of Action” – but it largely failed to live up to this promise. The overall progress was slow with Parties struggling to come to meaningful actions on pre-2020 emission reduction targets, a lack of commitment to finance for loss and damage and meagre contributions to the US\$100 billion roadmap for financing climate action in developing countries. Parties' ambitions fall well short of being able to keep the global temperature rise below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C and do not deliver the promises made in Paris. Studies show that the current nationally determined contributions (NDCs) lead us to an increase of 2.9 to 3.4°C in this century. Raising ambition should have been the central issue of this COP.

Nevertheless in some areas modest progress was made. Relevant to GenderCC's and LIFE's work was the decision taken to continue the Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) for another 3 years and to further enhance activities under the programme. The LWPG aims to achieve women's full and equal participation in the UNFCCC process and to strengthen gender-responsive policies in all activities concerning adaptation and mitigation as well as finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building. In order to achieve these goals, Parties decided to develop a Gender Action Plan and tasked the Climate Secretariat to continue conducting annual in-session workshops on gender-responsive climate policymaking and to offer trainings specifically for female delegates. The amendment of the LWPG furthermore invites all countries to appoint national gender focal points for climate negotiations, implementation and monitoring and to provide information on how they integrate gender when reporting on their national climate policies. Furthermore, we welcome the recognition of local and traditional knowledge as being crucial for climate policy formulation and of the importance of grassroots women's participation at all levels. Overall, the decision on climate change and gender acknowledges the relevance of gender-responsive climate policy in all activities concerning adaptation and mitigation, as well as related means of implementation, and thus goes further than the Paris Agreement.

However, despite this considerable progress, Parties unfortunately failed to agree on one major point – the question of finance. The agreed text simply states that all actions are to be undertaken “subject to the availability of financial resources”. We therefore call for Parties to take the actions under the LWPG seriously and to provide the Climate Secretariat with sufficient financial resources to fulfil its designated tasks – otherwise the LWPG will remain nothing but a wish list. Furthermore, we urge Parties to develop an ambitious Gender Action Plan that ensures timely implementation as well as the monitoring of gender-related decisions and mandates under the UNFCCC.

Another highlight of COP22 was the initiative for stronger climate action taken by the countries of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Its 48 members agreed to achieve 100% renewable energy use as rapidly as possible but at the latest by 2050. As a next step, the initiative should ensure that its activities to achieve the goal are gender-responsive as well as guarantee civil society participation. The CVF was set up in 2009 and brings

together countries that are disproportionately affected by climate change. We very much welcome this initiative and true leadership in climate action. We urge developed countries to provide support for the CVF and, crucially, to follow in their footsteps!

Despite these achievements, multiple events taking place around the world cast shadows of doubt over the negotiations. The insecure situation of (female) refugees forced to flee from conflicts and destroyed livelihoods, the inhumane treatment of water protectors fighting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, and of course, the presidential elections in the United States. The election of climate sceptic Trump is a terrifying affirmation of the ongoing success of extreme right-wing opinions in times when we need transnational cooperation and mutual solidarity more than ever, in order to deal with the challenges we face. It is a call for civil society to raise their voices in order to defend human rights, gender equality, indigenous people's and workers' rights within and beyond the UNFCCC process.

In addition, a number of decisions within the Paris Agreement will require ongoing observation and follow-up, even though they did not play a major role at this year's COP. One of these topics is the implementation of the mechanisms defined under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. In terms of cooperative approaches we hope to see more ambitious emission cuts at domestic level, instead of using carbon trading systems for industrialised countries to buy their way out of their responsibility. In relation to the Sustainable Development Mechanism, some Parties have indicated that they are keen to push for adopting as much as possible from the Clean Development Mechanism, instead of reviewing the process and taking the chance to reconsider other more effective and equitable options for implementation. A mechanism under the UNFCCC process should not be able to violate human rights and promote business-as-usual. Instead, the Sustainable Development Mechanism should foster ecological and social (especially gender) co-benefits, it should monitor and enhance sustainable development based on clear and comprehensive criteria and ensure real emission cuts. The mechanism pre-defined as being a non-market based approach should have a strong focus on climate justice, including gender-responsive activities.

We are also greatly concerned about the involvement of big corporations (e.g. nuclear energy or fossil fuel lobby) in the UNFCCC process and consultations. This issue is certainly not new. Yet COP22 in Marrakech gave the unpleasant impression that their influence and attendance has increased considerably and in a disproportionate manner. Some of our observations were that nuclear industry did not only hold its own side event, it also had an exposition space at the entrance to the civil society space in the Blue Zone and the big nuclear agency Rosatom together with the World Nuclear Association held a press briefing during the second week pushing for an equal emphasis to nuclear as a solution as to other mitigation options. During an event concerning cities, some stakeholders continually emphasised business, while civil society participation was deemed to play a less important role and the Dutch electronic producer Phillips had provided highly visible support for the Momentum for Change exhibition. It would not be difficult to list further examples. We are deeply concerned about the transparency of the process and the influence of these corporations over negotiations, as well as their access to internal information.

Despite our concerns, we feel that this COP nevertheless provided an impetus for stronger climate action, particularly within global civil society. The civil society groups are increasingly standing together in solidarity and must continue to put pressure on those responsible for implementation. In particular, the Women and Gender Constituency has brought together individuals from all different walks of life, who braved the COP once more with their stories, interventions, skills and experiences. The many synergies among civil society actors and their combined efforts will hopefully help to speed up the current course of the negotiations, to hold Parties accountable to their promises and to defend human rights.