

COP26: Feminist Climate Ambassadors call for a transforming environmental and social recovery

Economic, ecological and gender crises are the biggest challenges of our generation and they are inherently interlinked

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FEMINIST CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

We all know the state of play at COP but it is worth repeating: The report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) unequivocally states that the earth's surface is warming, that this change is caused by human activities, and that our future will involve a global increase in temperature, increased heat waves, and rising sea levels.

In short, Climate change is here, it is a global challenge and it cannot be solved. However, every single fraction of a degree of temperature makes a transformative difference in how changed our climate will be, and therefore every reduction in global emissions is important.

While few participate in negotiations that carry the potential to mitigate the consequences of climate change, many people – predominantly people who live in the Global South region, people of colour, women, queer communities and locally marginalised groups will continue to be displaced due to continuous environmental destruction, and human exploitation. Indigenous people, who have been fighting for survival while resisting and taking care of forests and ecosystems for centuries have been left unheard in any plans of alternative development or climate action. (Neo)colonialism, capitalism and ignorance is the cause for indigenous communities being the most at risk of food insecurity, drought, displacement, conflicts, and unemployment.

While accountability and equity is a premise for a livable climate and social justice, the biggest polluters are not being held accountable, and the preventive mechanisms are not being adequately enforced. Obliviousness to malicious actions and the invisibility of marginalised people is the mighty tool of the dominating exploiters.

In the current environmental contexts, and on the occasion of COP26, the collective of Feminist Climate Ambassadors addresses all governments, business representatives, academics and other decision-makers for a transforming environmental and social recovery including:

- 1. Acknowledgement of Historical Emissions as a way towards Climate Justice and accountability.** We must come to terms with our past to move towards a shared future.
- 2. While we understand that nature's valuation and its transformation into an exchangeable good is essential for many of the commitments that will allow COP26 to reach its goals, we ask for a more democratic nature's valuation process that integrates diverse perspectives and redirects from the current economic growth imperatives.**
- 3. Governmental implementations of feminist, queer, and intersectional approaches, that highlights mutual interdependence between human and non-human nature.**

We are all affected by the climate change crisis to some degree. However, what research has been showing for many years, the intensity of our pain is heavily influenced by our social status, the colour of our skin, gender identity, or sexual orientation. A gender-conscious environmental perspective can help decision-makers see, that women and non-binary people of colour, especially those living in marginalised and poor areas, are most impacted by global warming and gender-based violence. In addition, queer ecofeminist ideas of human vulnerability and dependence to other forms of life and non-living nature effectively contest oversimplified patriarchal ideas of a dominant man and subordinate nature.

- 4. Relocation of investments to capacity building and research towards professionals and youth living at the frontlines of the environmental crisis. These people will be able to move forward, as they are already living the consequences of climate change.**

Researchers of the Global South region are systematically discredited and/or undervalued. For example, less than 4% of global academic funding goes to research on climate change in Africa, and only 1% of authors being published are Africans. Partnerships where the different parties stand on equal footing, as opposed to 'saviour complex', and where indigenous knowledge is being valued is crucial.

- 5. Mental health must be nourished in our societies.** Resilience, courage, and empathy need to become measures of a successful person. This applies to climate change activism. It should make people feel empowered instead of anxious, excited to become active, instead of frozen by all the overwhelmingness that climate change seems to impose on us.

In addition, we call on all traditional media outlets – papers, TV, radio – to create a policy whereby all their journalists and researchers consider themselves ‘climate journalists and researchers’. We call on them to infuse climate into all of their stories. We call on them to realise that they are essential to holding our elected officials accountable and to informing the public.

The next five years are crucial. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed that collective action is possible and can help us move forward as a community. The affluent world owes the vulnerable population livelihood, decency, and dignity. The consequences of climate change are indeed unfair, but they should not remain so. We need action now before it is too late.

Feminist Climate Ambassadors

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