

Declaration of Women in Asia on Climate Change

We, indigenous, peasant, fisher, labour, rural and urban women, face the bulk of negative impacts of climate change and the false solutions to the climate crisis proposed by governments and so-called experts. Women continue to produce and provide food; work inside and outside homes to augment our family incomes and are often the principal income earners; and through our productive and reproductive labour, we ensure the welfare of our families and communities.

However, we are still not recognised by governments, and national and international institutions as contributors who sustain lives in our families, communities and societies, and therefore, we are systematically excluded from decision making about our lives, environments and natural resources. Particularly in relation to the climate crisis, we are identified as “victims”, but not as decision makers in determining how to tackle climate change and contributing solutions based on our wisdom and knowledge.

We, over 70 women from many parts of Asia with various backgrounds –indigenous, peasant, fisher, labour and from different networks and social justice movements, met on September 28 to 29 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. We exchanged experiences with our sisters and discussed the impacts of climate change in our communities and on us, the women, from these communities. We discussed strategies and solutions to bring our voices and thoughts into the discourse on climate change and shape solutions to tackle the climate crisis. We also resolved to continue our own education about climate issues, educate other women and policy makers, and build alliances and coalitions to work towards genuine climate justice with the principles of gender justice.

We recognise that the climate crisis is complex and far reaching, and we need to act urgently in order to put into place systems that can address the climate crisis in long term and sustainable ways. For this we need real solutions that will tackle the roots of the climate crisis rather than mechanisms that allow corporations to profit from the crisis and allow the wealthy to keep consuming and depleting resources, and polluting the atmosphere.

We want our children and future generations to live in a world that is just, healthy and capable of sustaining lives. Therefore, we declare our following positions:


As indigenous women

1. Respect and uphold the **right to self-determination** as women and as members of indigenous communities.
2. Women should be integral to the process of obtaining **genuine free, prior and informed consent** from indigenous communities on development projects within their traditional territories.

Agriculture

1. Promote and fund **sustainable agriculture, organic and agro-ecological** farming.
2. **Not to subsidies and support to industrial agriculture** and agri-business corporations.
3. Recognise **the rights of women farmers**, and the contributions of women in agriculture.
4. **Oppose carbon trading** and **Clean Development Mechanisms (CDMs)** in agriculture.
5. **No to genetically modified organisms (GMOs)**.
6. No to free trade agreements and export-oriented agriculture.
7. Defend **security of land tenure** for small-hold farmers, and equally for women and men.
8. Decisions about how to **use and preserve local ecological resources** should be made by local communities, with equal rights to women and men.

The Declaration is an open document that is expected to evolve in the coming years. As of press time, it has more than a hundred signatures. Parties who wish to support the Declaration may contact Tea Soentoro at tea@forum-adb.org



The “Declaration of Women in Asia on Climate Change” is a result of a women’s training held from 28 to 29 September 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. Based on the framework of climate justice, the text contains progressive positions even in otherwise still ambiguous and contested issues surrounding climate change. It highlights the central role of women primarily as agents in the fundamental management of communities and the environment.

Fishery

1. Call for all governments and international agencies to **enforce and protect fisherfolk rights**.
2. **No to market-based solutions on marine eco-systems** regarding climate change.
3. **Involve fisherfolk communities and organisations** in building community resilience to climate change based on local knowledge and capacity.
4. Protect, promote and **fund fish sanctuaries and mangroves based on local, fishery-based community rights**, that are proved to be low carbon by local government and international agreements.
5. **Regulate fish trade and enhance domestic markets** towards **food security** and building **community resilience**.

Forest

1. Exclude forests from carbon markets and as source of emissions offsets.
2. Recognise the **rights of Indigenous Peoples and their rights to territory**, especially Indigenous women’s rights.
3. Uphold the roles, interests and rights of women in using and protecting forests.
4. **No to mining** in forest and ecologically sensitive areas, including coastal areas; subject mining activities in all areas to strong and legal environmental and social regulations.
5. No to Reduction of Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (**REDD**).

Health

Recognise the rights of women to **healthy and safe environments**; governments must ensure the delivery of **basic health services** in adaptation measures that benefit women, children and low-income communities.

Energy

1. **No to nuclear power**, coal-fired power, large-scale hydropower and incinerators.
2. **No to agrofuels, geo-engineering** and false solutions proposed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), governments, Transnational/Multinational Corporations (TNCs/MNCs), the UNFCCC and others.
3. **Decentralise power production and distribution**, with regulations that prioritise small scale power utilities. Promote and fund community-based renewable energy.

Water and Sanitation

1. **No to privatisation of water and sanitation services**.
2. Protect water **as commons**.
3. Promote **sustainable sanitation**.

Financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation

1. Governments must make **commitments for reparation and restitution** in ways that do not create new debts for developing countries.
 2. Recognise the **historical and ecological debt** of the **North to the South**.
 3. Make financing commitments **free from policy conditions or restrictions**.
 4. Ensure that financing commitments are **not managed by IFIs** but by independent bodies that include the participation of civil society; these could be **through the UN** or **an alternative process**.
 5. **Cancel existing debts** of developing nations.
 6. Ensure **gender sensitivity** and **accounting of women’s unique economic, socio-political and cultural needs and priorities** in all financing arrangements.
- 