

Climate and Environmental Justice Summary of Umbrella Issue eDiscussion 2016

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international feminist, membership organization committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. AWID's mission is to strengthen the voice, impact and influence of women's rights advocates, organizations and movements internationally to effectively advance the rights of women.

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is a leading global institution for development research, teaching and learning, and impact and communications, based at the University of Sussex.

WEDO is a women's global advocacy organization that facilitates, convenes, and partners with hundreds of women's groups around the world, to demand a just and sustainable future. WEDO's mission is to ensure that women's rights; social, economic and environmental justice; and sustainable development principles – as well as the linkages between them – are at the heart of global and national policies, programs and practices.

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The [AWID 2016 Forum](#) taking place in Brazil in September 8-11, 2016 will focus on **'Feminist Futures: Building Collective Power for Rights and Justice'**. The intention of the Forum is to bring together a wide range of activists from diverse movements and struggles around the world that seek to advance human rights and justice, in order to assess the current context, their achievements so far, and challenges they now face. The Forum will be a space to build new visions and agendas for the future that place gender equality and justice at their centre. Most importantly, the Forum hopes to foster the kind of cross-movement dialogue, solidarity and action that is essential to make these visions a reality.

These visions will be sharpened within [several Forum components](#), including the **Four "Umbrella" issues** that aim to capture four broad challenges to social and gender justice confronting us today; reclaiming democratic space, bodily integrity and freedoms, States of our Feminist Movements, and climate and environmental justice.

Recognizing the multiple complexities involved in achieving the ambitious Forum goals and capturing the diverse visions and strategies around these themes, AWID planned a long-term process that includes collective and participatory discussions and actions before, at and after the Forum.

This eDiscussion, **hosted by AWID, WEDO and IDS from April 5th to 7th 2016**, was part of this process.

Context - Why the conversation?

We have to wake up! We have to wake up, humankind! We're out of time. We must shake our conscience free of the rapacious capitalism, racism and patriarchy that will only assure our own self-destruction. (...) Mother Earth – militarized, fenced-in, poisoned, a place where basic rights are systematically violated – demands that we take action. Let us build societies capable of co-existing in a manner that is just, dignified, and that protects life. Let us come together and remain hopeful as we defend and care for the blood of this planet and its spirits. —

Berta Caceres, 1971-2016

Environmental and human rights defender, feminist, mother, Indigenous leader of Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras, and guiding light in our struggles.

Climate change is often talked about from an environmental perspective. Concerns around natural disasters, icebergs melting, rising temperatures, greenhouse effects, among other issues, have been central to the debates. This is important. Strong evidence points to how the climate and environmental crises of our times are upsetting the Earth's ecological balance. As we push against our safe planetary boundaries, we challenge our very survival and the rights of future generations.

Yet, this conversation aims at complexifying and enriching this debate: it aims at intersecting the **environmental** narrative with the narrative of **justice**. Thus, climate change debates need to incorporate the analyses of the communities most directly impacted by the environmental and climate crises. Communities and peoples bring economic, social, cultural and political stories into the climate narrative, such as how current policies of economic globalization, fossil fuel industries and the prevalence of business over climate regulation continue to endanger life on our planet. Against the protests of movements and peoples, nature has become a source of commodities, raw material to be exploited, and mere fuel for our production and consumption patterns.

Evidence of this is in the Paris Agreement that came out of [COP21 in 2015](#): a dominant patriarchal capitalist elite and their corporations took decisions that affect us all without the consent of peoples and communities, and certainly without the consent of the earth and its other inhabitants. While the Paris Agreement delays urgent action and sets an unclear path towards curbing global warming, grassroots communities and Indigenous peoples denounce the current social, economic and cultural effects of rising oceans, natural disasters and the “humanitarian crises” - famines and mass migrations resulting from droughts and floods - of our times.

Yet these voices are kept in the margins of decision-making processes, and the rights of such groups continue to be challenged and violated. Those living in poverty pay the heaviest price for the devastation of the environment, especially family farmers, landless workers, migrant and Indigenous communities - and most of all, women living in the global South. The **gendered impacts of the environmental and climate crisis are now well documented**, among which are the serious effects of -(usually human-made)- disasters on women in particular, such as economic meltdowns, forced displacement, militarization, and the depletion of natural resources such as water and forests.

Women’s roles in “adapting” to a deteriorating environment are related to the nature of their gender roles and care work in most societies. These inequalities and vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by the intolerable fact that the women and communities who challenge the governments and private interests who cause this devastation often pay for their resistance with their lives. Defying the hegemonic powers that seek to appropriate their vital land, natural resources and territories protects lives, livelihoods and nature; yet is met with systematic repression and violence. The on-line discussions brought these issues to the front, from diverse voices of those with vast experience in these struggles.

The neglect of this justice component, particularly by governments and decision makers, is an outrage to us all. As our governments act as the handmaidens of corporate power interests, they actively repress and suppress dissent and resistance against the commodification of life and nature, and for justice for all.

It is clear now from all major sources (including the [Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC), climate and environment movements, Indigenous peoples, and governments) that in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, we must all

prioritize climate action now - especially governments as duty bearers, and Northern governments and large transnational corporations in particular, due to their historical responsibilities. As mentioned, COP21 confirmed that, despite the overwhelming evidence, the overall ambition of most States is gravely insufficient and largely tied to fossil fuel industry and unregulated macroeconomic policies.

Many of the flow-on effects of this ecocide have elicited feminist engagement at the policy, research, and advocacy levels – as witnessed, for instance, by the interventions of feminist groups in the deliberations at the [first UNCED conference in 1992](#) (the Rio Earth Summit); the People’s Summits and Women’s Summits in Lima, parallel to COP20, and in Paris, parallel to COP 21; or more recently, the interventions of feminist advocacy groups in the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [post 2015 development agenda](#); as well as other relevant economic, environmental and social policy spaces.

Indigenous groups, women’s environmental rights defenders, Black movements, Islander communities, mainstream human rights groups, labour unions working on transitions to a new economy, and increasingly more feminist and women’s rights organizations and movements are spearheading and supporting local, national, regional and global struggles for climate and environmental justice. Importantly, many expressions of Indigenous women’s movements are building from the feminist slogan “my body, my territory” to make evident the ‘right to decide on my body and to defend the territory where my body organizes its daily life’, in response to a central characteristic of capitalist accumulation today: the dispossession of land, territories and bodies.

Campaigns for collective action such as the Women’s Global Call for Climate Justice, and actions resulting from the People’s Climate March and the Climate Justice Women’s Assembly in 2015, as well as diverse women from the World March of Women, La Via Campesina and Grassroots Global Justice Alliance are playing a very active role in these struggles.

However, there is still much to be done so that feminist visions and women’s rights organizations and movements are more meaningfully engaged with issues of climate and environmental justice. The aim of this e-discussion was to contribute to increased awareness and exchange on relevant issues and strategies, and eventually a stronger engagement between feminists and women’s human rights activists and climate justice activists – small-scale farmers, grassroots, Indigenous, Black and islander’s communities, among others.

Through this online dialogue, we aimed to:

- Map core challenges and goals that cut across our diverse struggles
- Lay the foundations for identifying a shared agenda on building alternatives.
- Identify the potential alliances required to advance this agenda in the lead-up to the Forum, and to frame our relevant joint political actions in the post-Forum phase.

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To create an open and diverse space, efforts were made to reach out to a wide range of potential participants, and to allow for participation from multiple time zones and in various languages.

From April 5th to 7th, 2016, 30 activists and scholars from India, United States, Navajo Nation, Spain, Germany, El Salvador, France, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Bahrain, Fiji, The Netherlands, Peru, Colombia, Thailand, Nigeria, Brazil, and the United Kingdom participated in an on-line dialogue facilitated by Srilatha Batliwala of AWID (now of CREA) and Bridget Burns of WEDO.

Multiple moderators and key organizations actively supported the dialogue, particularly the [Grassroots Global Justice Alliance](#), [World March of Women](#), Sandra Moreno from SOC-SAT (the [Agrarian Worker's Union of Andalusia](#), part of the [European Coordination Via Campesina](#)), [Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development](#), [DIVA for Equality](#), and others. Participants included:

- Women's human rights and women's environmental rights activists, particularly those involved in "defending defenders"
- Indigenous peoples' groups and movements seeking to protect their lands, ways of life, and their *cosmovisions* in the face of environmental racism, violence, misogyny, and poverty
- Activists and movements fighting for alternatives to extractives (an economic model that is dependent on the large-scale removal (or "extraction") and exportation of natural resources) and its many forms and impacts, as well as those struggling to challenge the privatization of common lands and of natural resources like water
- Organizations and individuals supporting movements of rural women forced to adapt to shrinking access to water, fodder, and cooking fuel
- Individuals and groups involved in visioning and promoting "sustainable / green cities", sustainable and just urbanization, and anti-racism and anti-discrimination in cities
- Organized people of coastal areas and small island states and communities, whose very cities or countries are at risk of disappearing due to rising sea level; and those involved in the struggles of people displaced and disempowered by so-called "natural" disasters, as well as those forced to leave homelands that no longer provide secure livelihoods
- Actors working against the use of market-oriented tools (like carbon-trading) and the financialization of responses to the climate change crisis, and fighting global trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership
- Individuals working on promoting renewable and community energies and alternative economies
- Women mobilizing at local, national, regional and global levels to challenge the extractive, environmentally destructive and consumption-based economic model.

This summary is organized into three parts, corresponding to each key theme that the discussion was built around:

1. **Current climate and environmental realities around the world**
2. **The shape of our struggles and resistance**
3. **Sharing our victories: Strategies towards climate and environmental justice**

This summary by no means claims to cover all the aspects of this complex issue. It simply offers a sampling of analysis by participants who took part in the three-day discussion. We hope to make a contribution to broader conversations already taking place on these issues, and spark deeper analysis and collective action towards and after AWID 2016 Forum.

1. **Current climate and environmental realities around the world**

The current context of systemic crisis (...) is the result of a model that does not take into account the sustainability of human and natural life (...) Around the world, we encounter a system that foments inequity based on discrimination, and the belittling of everything that is not for sale or assimilation by the system under a profiteering logic.

Sandra Moreno, SOC-SAT

Feminist critics have drawn connections between the ongoing exploitation of natural resources in the capitalist system and the ongoing exploitation of unpaid or poorly paid care work carried out by women, which is largely unrecognised as economic activity in mainstream economic calculations and theories.

Kate Cahoon, Gender CC

Participant reflections on current climate and environmental realities pointed to the deep connections between climate chaos, environmental degradation, gender inequality and patriarchy, stemming from a broader political and economic systemic crisis.

Participant reflections on current climate and environmental realities pointed to the *deep connections between climate chaos, environmental degradation, gender inequality and patriarchy*, stemming from a broader political and economic systemic crisis. Key to the conversation was the recognition of the effects of ascribed gender roles, and women's work to care for their families, households and communities in a context of environmental degradation.

Economic systems are at the root of the climate and environmental crisis.

Capitalism, expressed in neoliberal trade rules, the economic and political dominance of multinational companies, and prevailing production and consumption patterns, is at the root of the climate and environmental crisis. As participants narrated, with the advent of the industrial revolution, the Earth has become a commodity to fuel production and consumption patterns based on undeterred accumulation, created needs, infinite growth and the private profit of a small global elite. This has led to mass land-grabbing, soil degradation and expanding agro-industrial frontiers, highly polluting and destructive extractivism, the flooding of our food and fields with toxic pesticides and agro-chemicals, the depletion of our water sources, and increasingly frequent and intense disasters such as droughts and hurricanes, among others.

Voices from struggles such as [Climate Justice movements](#) to [Black Lives Matter](#), and [Indigenous peoples](#) to migrant communities, described how neoliberal trade policies and treaties, offshore havens, structural adjustment regimes and other efforts to bolster markets and the private sector, increase the marginalization and precariousness of women around the world, particularly at the intersections of class and racial oppression. The recent release of the [Panama Papers unmask](#) offshore investments in the billions, [in a world where multinational tax avoidance causes hundreds of billions of lost development finance](#).

Participants also commented on the impacts of market-based approaches and corporate profiteering in climate change mitigation. [Global financial flows are unregulated, unaccountable](#) and highly militarized. This is particularly relevant to climate finance, as governments globally have pledged USD 10.3 billion to address climate change - yet US military spending only last year neared USD 600 billion.

The climate and environmental crisis exacerbates existing gender inequalities.

While a wealthy elite profits from the prevailing system, structural adjustment policies, deregulation, lack of adequate social protections, and the push for profit over people and planet impact poor and rural women the most. Climate chaos and environmental degradation exacerbate already existing inequalities and forms of oppression, putting women's bodies, lives and livelihoods at greater risk, particularly in rural areas and Indigenous communities.

Around the world, women tend to live in poverty at greater rates than men. The United Nations reported in 1997 that 70 percent of 1.3 billion people in poverty worldwide [are women](#). Testimonies in the online exchange referred to the difficulty to access additional and detailed data on this matter, yet based on their experiences and key studies, described the increased feminization of poverty, particularly in rural areas. Gender roles shape expectations, attributes, capacities and rights, and women's productive work is often undervalued. For example, [women make up 80% of farm labourers but own less than 2% of land and 1% of credit offered to farm-workers](#), and their work is often seen as secondary or as supporting the work of the male wage earner. This increases their vulnerability, and limits their capacity to respond to environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change.

This context is further characterized by North-South inequalities: the average person in the US emits 170 times the greenhouse gases that a person in Rwanda emits, yet those in the global South, and particularly rural and Indigenous women, bear the brunt of the climate crisis. North-in-South and South-in-North inequalities are also prevalent: Hurricane Katrina showed how poor women and children are not valued in the United States, especially Black women and children. As Rose Brewer described, in Flint, Michigan today "environmental racism and deep impoverishment converge", as Black children and families have been lead-poisoned through their water.

Gendered care work increases vulnerability to climate and environmental degradation.

As participants described, due to the gender division of labor, women are tradition-

ally in charge of care and domestic work - and environmental degradation, climate variability and pollution are critical obstacles to its safe realization.

Particularly in rural areas, care work often takes place in direct dependence on the natural environment and natural resources, such as firewood or rivers, lakes and underground water. Because of their ascribed gender roles, women and girls are often in charge of acquiring water for their household. As the water crisis around the world is increasingly acute, water shortages greatly increase their burden of work, as well as their exposure to violence along longer and riskier daily journeys.

Another example shared was that of Ethiopia, currently hit by the worst El Niño phenomenon in 15 years, linked to global warming. Drought and floods in the Greater Horn of Africa region have led to over 19 million people living in food insecurity, [with over 10 million people in Ethiopia at risk of hunger](#). As Azeb Girmai described, women, particularly pregnant and lactating mothers, and children under five, [are the worst hit](#).

Testimonies also referred to the health impacts of new chemicals in agriculture, as when farmers get sick and cannot work, it is the women who take the lead in caring for the people and communities. In other contexts, girls are put in charge of the riskiest farm work, to procure for the family's daily needs, while the boys are in school. [According to a study, in South India](#) girls from 9 to 14 years of age have extensive nerve damage from spreading pesticide with their bare hands. Boys are not affected equally because they are in school as opposed to in the fields – in this context, “girls subsidize the opportunity cost of their brothers’ education with their labour and damaged bodies”.

Lastly, women's care work following a natural disaster is also a subsidy to the cost of global climate change. Before, during and following a natural disaster, women's burden of domestic and care work increases, in their efforts to help their families and communities to adapt to climate impacts. Natural disasters can also increase risks to women's safety, as Adi Vasulevu narrated. In Fiji, the recent Tropical Cyclone Winston led to 44 deaths, of which the majority were women. [Cases of rape have been reported at evacuation centers, and trauma and illness is high](#).

Violence against women and the control of nature are intersecting forms of violence.

As Sandra Moreno described, the connection between the control over nature and over women's bodies is made explicit through the forms of violence with which we extract resources and violate women's bodies.

For example, as Jihan Gearon of the Black Mesa Water Coalition narrated, the Navajo Nation is traditionally matriarchal. But when the US government discovered mineral resources in Navajo territories, their lands were turned over to the oldest males in each family, and Navajo traditions were eroded. Today, while fossil fuel extraction flourishes, Navajo lands are decimated, poverty is rampant, and [violence against women has risen sharply](#).

Conflict, militarization and displacement are induced by climate and environmental degradation, and increase the vulnerability of women.

Women are particularly vulnerable to mass displacement and increased exposure to sexual violence due to armed conflict. Competition for increasingly scarce resources fuels tension and conflict, which is on the rise.

For example, local research in Asia Pacific shows that in the last 60 years, [at least 40% of all intrastate conflicts have been linked to natural resources and the environment](#).

[Ecological crisis and climate change-induced drought in Syria fuelled mass rural exodus](#), which augmented tensions and heightened conflict in the country. Women, often with children, as well as unaccompanied children comprise a large proportion of the refugees now fleeing the region, and [face continuous violence and sexual harassment along their path to assumed safety](#).

According to some studies, [climate change-induced migration could reach 1 billion people by 2050](#). This forced migration increases precariousness, loss of assets and competition for basic resources, and therefore further accentuates the difficulties related to care work previously described. In the traditionally matrilineal Cateret Islands in Papua New Guinea, [women have been forced to leave their homes and relocate to Bougainville, an Island with some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world](#). In other cases, while men are given infrastructure-fixing jobs after a disaster, women must stay at home and engage in unpaid care work. These gendered aspects of migration must be further researched and better documented.

In Central America, communities face increasing militarization and privatization of security in alliance with governments and armies, particularly around the extraction of natural resources and large construction projects. This brings about [heightened levels of violence and aggression against those who are on the frontlines, defending their natural resources and territories. Women environmental defenders face particularly acute forms of violence](#), including violence from within their own communities and families, in retaliation for stepping outside their ascribed roles in society. As Patricia Ardon of JASS Meso America described, the violence is also expressed by discrediting and spreading rumours about women environmental defenders, who according to mainstream media outlets “should be in their homes” and are “opposed to development”. Women environmental defenders and women human rights defenders, as well as grassroots activists and communities opposed to environmentally harmful projects, are risking their lives in the face of relentless state repression and private security violence. This was the case of Berta Cáceres of COPINH in Honduras, [recently murdered in her own home after facing multiple threats for opposing the Agua Zarca Dam Project](#).

New threats in the form of false solutions to the climate and environmental crisis.

Market-based solutions allow polluters to evade their historical responsibilities while continuing to gain profit. They do not stop the release of greenhouse gases nor address the need to reduce consumption and production patterns. Clean Development Mechanisms and UN [Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation](#)

(REDD) projects have been shown to be risky, increase land-grabs, threaten the livelihoods of Indigenous women, and violate the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

KEY DEMANDS

Women's role in care work positions them to bring diverse and critical solutions to the climate and environmental crisis.

Rural women respect and work in accordance with the cycles of nature, yet despite their expertise, are rarely included in policy debates. Women are also often the strong backbone of communities, and many-a-time the first and most dedicated environmental justice organizers - yet their voices are very rarely valued or propped up. As one participant stated, the political participation of women is fundamental to the realization of climate and environmental justice.

Care work must be re-distributed, and women's work must be adequately valued.

Care work must be redistributed in a just manner, to assure the sustainability of life and equality of conditions. We must continue to insist on the linkages between climate and environmental degradation and the violation of workers' rights, particularly in terms of women's access to decent, safe working conditions and fair wages.

2. Sharing the shape of our struggle: How we organize resistance

The struggles around water and land rights, food sovereignty, and transition away from extractivism are feminist struggles and must also lift up the essential demands around women's autonomy over their bodies, their lives, the livelihood, and their right to live free of violence. Through this deepening consciousness in our movement, we are fundamentally orienting our demands toward our vision of a Just Transition.

Cindy Wiesner, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

Communities are struggling on a daily basis to defend their life systems and cope, as there is no other way to survive and those struggles are the real alternative options that communities on the ground know. It is the combined effort of what is locally practiced and internationally defended and brought out to the light that give effective pressure to influence climate policy.

Azeb Girmai

This section of the eDiscussion focused on how, and in which spaces - communities, governments, and international processes - we are organizing resistance and struggles to confront the realities previously described.

Self-sufficiency is central to the power that local groups and grassroots movements have.

Women's groups are often under-resourced when it comes to external funding, but have vast strength and wealth in their experiences, visions, creativity, companionship, mutual support, their own bodies and most importantly, their courage. This gives them a particular strength, autonomy and collectivism.

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As Srilatha Batliwala described, from historic village struggles and [tree-hugging tactics to protect forests from devastation](#), to publically shaming rapists and corrupt officials, and engaging in hunger strikes and lie-ins, women in India use ingenious guerrilla tactics to unmask, subvert and infiltrate power structures.

In the Asia Pacific region, as Camille Risler shared, when women “come together with the collective intention of breaking oppressive power structures feeding climate change, they have the strength to demand climate justice for themselves”, pushing local governance to recognize the need to include women in decision-making structures. Our power is in the streets, in the fields, and in direct action.

Movements and groups are harnessing the power of storytelling and seeking to control their own narratives.

The role of the storyteller and communicator is key, particularly in efforts to increase participation and women-led decision-making. Autonomous communication and local control over stories is essential in building connections, trust and safe spaces in and between groups. Community media and art can empower women and marginalized communities, helping to better understand issues, craft new ideas, shape the news, and facilitate increased visibility in governance structures.

[Feminist participatory action research for climate justice](#) is one concrete tool that is being used to document climate impacts, design solutions and advocate for policy changes in a way that allows the women participating to set the agenda and control the outcomes of the research process. This is itself a form of structural change, in the face of patriarchy and the marginalization of local voices.

Groups are also making efforts to tip the scales in terms of who speaks and defines justice within media and climate journalism, in a context where only [15% of those interviewed on climate during the UN climate talks were women](#). Women’s voices and a women’s rights perspective are key to the climate debate, and cannot continue to be marginalized.

Adi Vasulevu also shared [the community media work of FemLINKPACIFIC](#), and emphasized that when engaging in solidarity communications work with communities affected by natural disasters and climate vulnerability, it is important to note that communication is a two-way channel. Solidarity groups must begin by listening to those most affected, as mutual learning is part of the larger struggle for social transformation.

We are making connections between local realities and global issues and structures.

Demonstrations of this come from the [Greenbelt movement in Kenya](#), which is connecting everyday hardships and the encroachment on local forests, with deeper issues of disenfranchisement and loss of traditional values. And Indigenous feminisms’ instinctive and common sense understanding of injustice and exploitation as grounded in local realities and possibilities, further shows that groups around the world are recognizing the links between their local realities and a broader systemic crisis.

Though climate negotiations have limited power to subvert the global economic system, and are characterized by weak, unjust commitments; movements from the global South and the global North are also joining forces to influence that space, combining what is “locally practiced and internationally defended”.

Spaces such as the [Women and Gender Constituency at the UN climate talks](#) and the [Women’s Major Group in the Sustainable Development UN process](#), and initiatives to fund women delegates and representatives to attend UN talks have important potential for influencing policy spaces, but also for movement building more generally. This is also the case for platforms such as the [Women’s Global Call for Climate Justice](#), which seeks to amplify decentralized actions globally.

Groups are increasingly rejecting single-issue campaigns and demands, and recognizing the intersectionality of diverse movements and struggles.

Climate justice groups in Northern America, led by communities of color and low-income communities, are rejecting single-issue campaigns and lending their solidarity and strength to struggles against deportation, incarceration, criminalization and state violence, racial profiling and gentrification. As Jill Mangaliman described, groups are increasingly recognizing that system change requires an intersectional and diverse movement of people. “We know that solutions look different for our communities and that there is no one-size fits all, (and) recognize that we must resist in the different ways that we can and that we must do it together, and that our struggle is vast and intertwined.”

Groups in Latin America are also linking the fight against extractivism, the fight for the right to protest and the fight against violence against women, which has at its intersection the repression of women environmental defenders and women human rights defenders.

We are reclaiming power, and at the same time seeking to dismantle it.

The examples shared through the discussion show that resistance around the world is about reclaiming power, sneaking up on power, exposing power, and telling our own stories about what power is and where it should lie. In an uneven playing field, we are constantly trying to reconfigure power relations, and thus transform our realities. We recognize that patriarchy and militarization are at the root of the systemic crisis and that women’s groups and feminist movements are striving to dismantle power, to re-center the sustainability of life, care, the commons, and collective forms of co-existing.

KEY CHALLENGES

Equal access to communication, information and funding continues to be a challenge for our movements globally.

A result of this is that, for example, even in this e-discussion we lacked voices from Africa. We must be aware of the digital gap and language barriers, and strive not to reproduce them within our movements. Specialized information, procedures and exigencies for accessing resources and opportunities push local groups to depend on intermediaries. The NGOization of struggles further makes it difficult for non-in-

stitutionalized groups to access funding, as does the lack of flexible funding led by women's actions and not the priorities and formats of funders.

Greater solidarity is needed to increase the visibility and influence of grassroots, poor and Indigenous women.

This is expressed, for example, in the need to strengthen the call for increasingly urgent adaptation efforts, a top priority for the most vulnerable sectors of society.

As one participant highlighted, "How we organize within existing power structures of policy spaces, recognizing that they replicate patriarchy, hierarchy and oppression, in order to transform them requires conscious consideration of who is in those spaces and who is not - and of how we balance building capacity to effectively engage while not getting wedded to the power that comes from being in that space."

Organizations, NGOs, facilitators and others in the environmental movement and our own communities can perpetuate gender oppression and other inequities, and struggle to center the leadership of women. We must recognize gender relations as power relations, and approach issues through an intersectional lens.

3. Sharing our victories: how will we advance climate and environmental justice?

(We are here), despite the formidable forces of corporate power, complicit and repressive regimes, military might, patriarchal cultures and media invisibility that are arraigned against us. This in itself constitutes a huge victory (...) In more and more locations, these struggles have brought women out of constricted traditional roles, and transformed them into public and political actors. (...) There is a growing understanding that climate change and environmental degradation are gendered issues - and in fact, women's issues.

Bridget Burns, WEDO and Srilatha Batliwala, CREA

Moving forward, we need to draw on all the strength gained so far from the historical movements, pool all our resources, tools, innovative potential, traditional and practical knowledge and capacities. We need to identify and address inter-sectional inequalities which can impact the effectiveness of social, economic or political changes.

Kalyani Raj, All India Women's Conference

In part three, participants shared insights on what has been achieved as a result of women's struggles that advance not only climate and environmental justice, but also the rights of women to frame and shape the agenda. Additionally, we reflected on how we can build on the insights from these achievements for the future, and what key strategies emerge from these gains to create a more just and healthy planet.

Recognizing and remembering our victories.

It can be challenging to identify our successes in the context of the relentless global power structures we are facing. However, women's movements and groups have and are fundamentally shifting paradigms and realities. Women's leadership is a victory

in itself, with deep, often unrecognized consequences. We are public and political actors, and active contributors. We are increasingly recognizing ourselves, and being recognized in diverse ways by our own communities and others. As Bridget Burns asked: “Have we won only if we have shaped and changed the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the [Conference of The Parties](#) outcomes? Or are our struggles themselves, and women’s critical leadership roles in them, of equal value, even if we cannot see their impact in immediate terms?”

Women are playing essential, unique roles in areas from the management of land and natural resources such as forests, water and soil, to adaptation policies and disaster risk management. In one inspiring story shared, women from an island in Fiji with a population of 160 people, and only two men, were able to go from house to house in the midst of Cyclone Winston and guide everyone to safety, protecting their babies and the most vulnerable with their bodies for six hours. Though all houses in the village were destroyed, everyone survived due to the courageous efforts of the women.

The exchange included several references to the fact that thanks to the work of women’s movements, the gendered nature of climate change and environmental degradation is increasingly present in analysis and debates. There is more recognition of the types of injustices and violence that women are subjected to in diverse contexts, and we are mainstreaming the notion that having gender equality and anti-violence laws in place is not enough for real, substantive change.

As Kalyani Raj stated, current generations must not take for granted current social or cultural norms for greater freedoms and equality, that just a few decades back were unthinkable.

Stories of our struggles replenish our movements. Memory is key to recognizing our achievements and fuelling our work.

Built into every setback and obstacle are the seeds of new and renewed struggles and strategies. Stories of struggles feed new generations and replenish our movements with what [the Zapatistas](#) call “dignified rage” and inspiration. Our struggles are a legacy for the broader movement, and for the future. In addition to documenting and keeping alive the memories of our struggles the day-to-day contributions, resilience, and care work of women also need to be better documented and recognized through gender-disaggregated data and participatory research.

We must be wary of the capacity of patriarchy and systems of oppression to self-renew.

We must not forget to sustain our advances. Though we have managed to secure policies around gender budgeting, gender inclusion, or laws against violence against women, instances of abuse, injustice and inequality continue. As a participant described, “Patriarchy recycles itself and reinvents itself to co-opt or eclipse our conquests”. Srilatha Batliwala added: “Capitalism seems to shed its old skin like a snake, and emerge anew”. Our struggles are not over. We have to continuously direct efforts towards sustaining our achievements, to avoid instances of what Kalyani Raj called taking “one step forward and two steps back”.

A clear challenge going forward is to look inwards, at our own communities and movements, and identify the oppressive power structures and dynamics we reproduce.

Our work does not occur in a vacuum, and capitalist and patriarchal principles can “slip their way in”. We must not cease to question, expose and transform the “internalized and un-interrogated patriarchal and oppressive practices within movements, including reproducing age, race, class, caste hierarchies” and sexual and gender identity discrimination. As Laura Asturias described, there are many instances where women show a lack of solidarity towards other women – for example their co-workers, or their employees, in the case of women employed to do domestic work and who are paid below minimum-wage salaries. We must see our movements as spaces to build and live the justice, equality and love that we seek through our struggles. Otherwise, “how can we motivate people to risk their lives in our struggles?” We need to not just have goals, but to live them.

Spaces for dialogue and reflection, such as this e-discussion, are of critical importance.

Those internal contradictions and difficulties are precisely “why moments of reflection, evaluation, contemplation, and feedback, such as this Forum, are so important”. Without such self-criticism and inward-looking moments, our work is “do as I say, not as I do.” Furthermore, cross-movement dialogue and reflection nurture our imagining and strategizing. As Rose Brewer said, “Changing the narrative demands what we have been doing over the past days, creating a deeper dialogue and imagining broader actions...this demands our envisioning (and) a coming together of movements and forces in motion that cross scope and scale, North and South, orchestrating a new song for the world from the ground up.”

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Radical change lies in building up the local and connecting it to the global.

Building a Feminist Fossil-Fuel Free Future requires strong local movements and a shared vision to challenge and redistribute power on a global scale. As Kate Lappin noted, groups have been talking about a Global Strike – inspired by experiences such as the women’s general strike in Iceland in 1975, which brought the country to a standstill - but there is a need to further educate us and strategize at the global level for actions with powerful economic and political impact.

We need to continue to translate community-level efforts into the national and global level, ensuring accountability and people’s monitoring. Ultimately, for paradigm shifts to occur, and for policy to be effective, it must be rooted in local engagement and organizing.

Self-care is critical to the sustainability of our movements in the long term.

We have to think about the survival, well-being and self-care of our women defenders. This is not an indulgence or a weakness – it is recognizing that we are human, and that many of us balance multiple roles and work. Mutual care is already a part of women’s work, but further, intentional initiatives such as [JASS’s heart-mind-body methodology](#), [Elige’s self-care and protection manual](#), the work on self-care and wellness done by IMD, and [the work of UAF](#) are much needed.

Strong women’s leadership is rooted in community.

The roles that women play as daughters, sisters, partners, mothers, grandmothers, neighbors and friends ground and give impulse to the work and struggles of communities and movements around the world. Women’s leadership has been at the centre of strategies, especially leadership from women from communities. From examples of women organizing themselves in farming cooperatives, to collectively taking charge of disaster response, women’s struggles are communally grounded. As the group noted, we must value and protect this aspect of our organizing.

It is time to celebrate our victories, however small they may seem.

Let’s celebrate our tangible campaigns and movement victories, from that of [Destiny Watford](#), a young black woman in Baltimore who took leadership of a successful fight against a toxic incinerator in her community, to the [gender equality dimension that gender and finance advocates have achieved within the international climate finance space](#), such as the [Green Climate Fund](#) and the [Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund](#). Groups working closely with community-based and community-led groups insisted on the need to celebrate the constant daily work, as groups engage in capacity-building, popular education, data collection, communication, technical advising, technology sharing, and other political activities. These changes may be incremental, but are ultimately stepping-stones along a longer road.

It is also time to celebrate our bodily integrity - and the fact that we are [still] here. As one participant said, “We cannot forget that our bodies are the first territory on which oppression is exercised, but also from where we practice resistance, *it is from here that we are free and gain conscience of our capacity and rights to fight.*”

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Finally, the call is to celebrate “our needs as multi-dimensional, multi-issue people”, with multiple and intersecting forms of identity. One of these dimensions is the spiritual one. As one participant shared, Indigenous women from the Americas honor the sacred system of life in the new moon - and on the last night of this eDiscussion, coincidentally also the new moon, we were invited to do so too.

We invite participants of the AWID Forum to join us in the three-hour discussion on Climate and Environmental Justice, alongside diverse movements and civil society organizations –social and ecological activists, women’s rights activists and human rights advocates, among others - to analyze the gendered impacts of the environmental and climate crisis, its intersections with socio-political and economic upheaval, violence and militarization, and the need to search for common feminists alternatives to the current system. Please check the Forum program, app or website for the final time and place of this session.

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