

EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM AFRICA



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FROM WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISM TO CLIMATE ACTIVISM: MY INTEREST IN CLIMATE FINANCE

After almost 19 years of activism in the field of women's rights and gender equality, I decided to start working the issue of environment and climate change **because:**

- 1. there are very few francophone women groups working in this field in order to increase their engagements on those issues.**
- 2. There is currently lot of redirection of funding to this sector and many programs being drafted and implemented in our countries and we have to bring in gender lens to ensure that they are being gender sensitive and gender responsive. And **this can't be done without the active participation and contributions from gender advocates!****

THE ROLE OF GENDER ADVOCATES

Even where sometimes there is political engagement and an openness from the project initiators towards gender sensitivity, **oftentimes, they lack capacity on how to appropriately mainstream gender into the various components of the project**; and they usually end up simply adding the number of women beneficiaries or as participants to the workshops.

I am fully convinced that **we need to invest in this field and make sure that climate finance equally benefits women and girls** as well as men and boys in our communities.

WHY SHOULD WE (WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS) BE INTERESTED IN CLIMATE FINANCE MONITORING?

1. Women's rights organizations and activists have to be interested in GCF and climate finance monitoring in general, because **this is a very important sustainable development agenda issue that affects our lives and well-being and that of our communities and the entire planet.**
2. Because of the increased consciousness on the urgency of the need to take action to initiate climate mitigation and adaptation solutions, **women's groups have to ensure that these solutions are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive and do take into account the experiences and concerns of women as well as men throughout the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all related policies and programs;** this is key to ensure that these policies and programs do not perpetuate inequality and that both men and women equally benefit from their outcomes.

WHY SHOULD WE (WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS) BE INTERESTED IN CLIMATE FINANCE MONITORING?

As women's rights activists and gender advocates, **we have develop over the years lot of skills and capacity on how to mainstream gender into projects.** But unfortunately *most development actors and planners are lacking this capacity* even if there is currently the political will to be more gender sensitive. **We need to be proactive and seek ways to engage and contribute to these processes in our countries and regions and start developing mutually beneficial working partnerships** with the institutions that are initiating and implementing climate related solutions.

They oftentimes ignore that we have the expertise and usually look for consultants outside our field to provide these services and we are generally not satisfied with the results. **We should STOP limiting our interventions to lobby and advocacy** and start **requesting to be partners** on these projects/programs.

WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY DOING IN THE GCF AFRICA GENDER GROUP: SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

In the African region, we have decided :

1. **to set up a regional group: we hold monthly meetings (in English) where we discuss how to better organize ourselves to monitor the GCF work on our continent**
2. **Starting on September 5th, to set up a Francophone group** and hold parallel **monthly meetings** realizing the linguistic challenges French speaking members of the group face to contribute to discussions; but also to increase their engagements with the GCF processes in their countries
3. **to have Country Monitors in all African countries** and promote country-level engagement because projects drafting and implementation take place at country level. Below is the names of our current Country Lead Monitors :

South Africa: Bertha CHIRORO

Mali: Kassoum COULIBALY

Togo: Noufoh DARE

Nigeria: Titilope Ngosi AKOSA

Tanzania: Eymuna Maria MATUI

Burkina Faso: Zenabou SEGDA

Ghana: Faustina BOAKYE

Uganda: Miriam TALWISA

THE CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING

There are many challenges but **the most important is the availability of resources to support our work.**

It is very difficult to monitor GCF and climate finance processes without having the minimum resources to support the plans that we design to efficiently do so.

This work takes staff time to :

- **read** through available documentation and keep up-to-date on the process/processes we decide to monitor,
- **write/input** to advocacy pieces and reports,
- **share information** with the wider women's groups to **seek their support and endorsements**,
- **travel** to attend sessions,
- **engage** in different ways with the various stakeholders, etc.

THE CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING

Another challenge is the **openness** of the stakeholders we have to engage with, **to listen to us and allow us to share out inputs with them.**

In Africa, it mostly depends on their good willingness **and also on our perseverance** and the efficient strategies we are able to put in place.

But overall, **our actions are more efficient if they are designed to continue and include several components and activities and do not stop after one single action.**

And **this is why it is so important that they are resourced and well coordinated.**

MY VISION/HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS WORK

When we started this collaborative work with WEDO and Both ENDS in January,

- **my insight was to increase African women's engagement with the GCF process and**
- **my ambition was to create a regional group which will have members in all African countries** since they are all receiving or eligible to receive GCF and other climate funds grants.

Even though we are far away from our target (we currently only have 8 Lead Country Monitors and members in 23 countries), **I believe we are on the good way and have put in place the appropriate mechanisms to be able to do so:** our group decision to have Lead Country Monitors who commissioned to mobilize women's groups engagements in their country around GCF processes.

MY VISION/HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS WORK

- We need to remain engaged and find ways to do so.
- *We also need to find innovative ways to fundraise and get the necessary financial support that we need to keep carrying out this work.*
- More importantly, **we need to strengthen our regional network so that we could effectively lobby GCF African Board members and other stakeholders and contribute to regional processes**
- because **“we are stronger together”!**