

Open Letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
9 March 2010

His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,

We, the signatories of this letter, write to you to express our disappointment in your recent nomination of an all-male High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing. This appointment made during CSW-54, which also marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, is of great concern to gender equality advocates everywhere.

Yesterday, women and men around the world celebrated advancements towards securing women's rights and gender equality on International Women's Day. Unfortunately, while activism, advocacy, research, policies, budgets and programmes have contributed to progress in gender equality, there is much work yet to do. Women still make up the poorest of the poor, have unequal access to land, loans, education and resources, and are underrepresented in decision-making bodies. The appointment of nineteen men to the new High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing proves this point.

While we applaud your initiative in establishing such an esteemed group of advisors to address climate change finance – surely one of the most critical issues of our time, we are deeply concerned that the panel neglects to include even a single woman. The panel is representative of North and South, industrialized and developing, public and private; but it is not representative of women and men.

This year, tremendous strides have been made in increasing women's participation – both on national delegations to negotiating meetings, as well as among civil society groups engaged in the issue of climate change – and gender equality text was integrated into UNFCCC negotiating documents for the first time. Women and men feel the impacts of climate change differently, and women and men both have capacities, expertise and roles to play in responding to the threats of climate change effectively and efficiently. Moreover, climate change is a threat to sustainable development, to which gender equality and equity is a well-known prerequisite.

You have highlighted the importance of women's participation at all levels of climate change decision-making throughout your tenure as Secretary-General. We urge you now to match your actions to your words by appointing qualified women to the High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing now.

The undersigned organizations respectfully and urgently request your appointment of an equitable representation of women and men on your crucial High-Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing.