

SB 36 in Bonn, Germany

On the 12th. June 2013 GenderCC held a side event called "**The Social Dimensions of Climate Change Mitigation: Tackling the Fairness Gap**". The panel was made up of a range of international speakers who shared their views and experiences on the need to address social dimensions of climate change in the case of mitigation, since these are too often neglected.

GenderCC board member Gotelind Alber opened the panel by explaining how merely focusing on poverty and differences between countries is not adequate, as inequalities and disparities also exist within countries, for instance in regard to affluence, ethnicity, the rural-urban divide, and of course, gender. She pointed out that while cost effectiveness and environmental effects are often emphasised in the context of mitigation, it is also critical to consider social dimensions. This does not just mean identifying vulnerability, it is also about addressing (gendered) carbon footprints, as well as capability and willingness to reduce carbon emissions. Emphasising that 'gender' is not just about poor women, Gotelind made clear that gender is a social category, which entails socially constructed roles. These are linked to differences in education and income, the gendered division of labour, cultural constraints and legal discrimination. Policies need to pay attention to the intersectional character these inequalities, and should reflect this complexity.

Kate Cahoon, also from GenderCC, spoke about the human rights framework and how this can be used to address the social dimensions of mitigation. While the effects of climate policies which accompany greenhouse gas reductions are frequently described as 'non-carbon' or 'co-benefits', these social or human dimensions are of critical importance. States have obligations under international human rights law to protect, promote and fulfill human rights - this must also apply in the case of climate change mitigation, both at the level of commitments, and the policies which are implemented. She suggested that instead of 'overburdening' the climate process, human rights could be used as a normative instrument to 'raise the ambition' on mitigation.

In her speech, Simone Lovera from the Global Forest Coalition looked critically at social impacts of bio-fuels, making a strong case against the corporate-driven form of green capitalism. 'Renewable energy does not equal sustainable energy', she noted, pointing out the negative effects of biofuels, including food scarcity, land-grabbing and risky technologies. Lovera showed how biofuels affect women more strongly than men, since women in their perceived role as care-givers tend to carry the burden of the negative health and other social impacts. She ended her presentation with a number of recommendations, and a call to put an end to subsidies for bio-fuels.

Kuini Rabo from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community provided examples from Kiribati of the role of traditional knowledge and cultural aspects in community-driven mitigation efforts. She talked about alternative forms of energy, including revising traditional energy (for example, solar energy to dry marine products and fruits, returning to wind to navigate the sea, and using rocket stoves for cooking). Their aim is to use culture as a method to communicate mitigation activities and contribute to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Kuini stressed the important role of social capital in the Pacific, living communally and working together within the traditional system, also to achieve promotion of gender equality.

Ahsan Ahmed from the Center for Global Change provided a further case-study, addressing the interesting topic of socially responsive mitigation in Bangladesh, where the focus is usually on adaptation. Presenting a case study on brick making, he highlighted that mitigation activities, in particular if they receive incentives must be combined with social innovations. By formalising

their labour in these industries, policies targeting women were able to improve social and health conditions.

Wrapping up, Gotelind highlighted further examples from developed countries, which can be regarded as sensitive to the social dimension, but nevertheless gender-blind. She stressed the need for a multidimensional approach, as well as gender-sensitive tools and methodologies.

Participants raised a number of further considerations in the discussion afterwards, yet unfortunately time was limited, meaning that not all social dimensions could be adequately addressed. We hope this discussion will be on going!

