



Women In The Forest: No Fairy Tale – Side events COP 13, 6th December, 2007

Minutes by Sharmind Neelormi

There have been 4 speakers: Rachel Nampinga (EcoWatch, Uganda), Anna Fillipino (World Rain Forest Movement, Uruguay), Anastasia Pinto (Meitei Nation, India), and Simone Lovera, (Global Forest Coalition, Paraguay). The event was facilitated by Gotelind Alber and co-hosted by LIFEe.V./genanet, gendercc - women for climate justice, African Network for Gender and Climate Change. The program begins with a reality tale from India on forest and life, presented by Isolde Alber.

Gotelind Alber briefed the audience about the position paper of gender-CC network for UNFCCC COP 13, Bali. She focused on the ultimate, i.e., ***full integration of gender justice in Climate Change policies***. She said that emerging gendercc-network for women through global activities can play key roles in this process.

Rachel Nampinga presented three case studies (projects) from Uganda. She mentioned that, in her country, women are so attached to trees that if she gets some problem she goes to trees and share the problems. Men in Uganda dominate forest management. Rachel mentioned about three projects in Uganda. One of these three projects has introduced indigenous nurseries and helped to trace back the lost fauna. In Karmaja district, Northern Uganda, overgrazing has been causing forest and land degradation. Now, though it is a male dominated domain, women have come together to conserve the forest. Improved cooking stoves have been replaced by the traditional ones, consequently energy efficiency has increased requiring lesser amounts of cooking fuel. Another project she mentioned introduced commercial fish farming, new varieties of crops and nurseries. She ends up with the comment that if women can get involved in forest management, much can be done.

According to Ana Filippino women take care of forests in many ways. Women manage water and food at household level: they have got all the traditional knowledge, they know about plants, medicine and know their usages very well. She identifies monoculture as one of the major causes of forest degradation. Women in many areas in the world are completely dependent on forest; they are being affected in a very special way by this monoculture – she adds. Because of monoculture, in Brazil, many people are evicted from the land, and are forced to go to cities for livelihoods. Ultimately, women often become the maids in the houses of rich people. Experience from Ecuador has shown that, though the process of 6 several projects has begun with saying that these projects are beneficiary for the people, local people ultimately have been forcibly evicted. Citing from the experiences in Swaziland, South Africa, Anna says that due to the practice of monoculture there has been a huge forest fire during last August. Following that, many women along with men are raising voices that “Earth, water, seed, forest are the basis of life and can not be commercialized”.

Anastasia Pinto made her presentation on gendered knowledge in the carbon calamity world, sharing the experiences from India. In India, she said, there are so many paradigms in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, race, language, clothes and others. In sex segregated communities there are gender specific roles. As monoculture has been taking place, the diversity is shrunk to a few minimal varieties which is generally adored by the market. In the name of development, she commented, we have been reducing diversity. She gives the example of TEHRI Hydro Development Project in India, which she titles as controversial. She stressed on the correlation between biological diversity and cultural diversity. Communities are uprooted from their lands as a consequence of project related activities and now they are living in the slums in city areas.

Simone Lovera's presentation was on "proposals to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries (REDD) and their impacts on women." She criticized the neoliberal market-based approach to forest conservation. Giving environmental values to forests at marketable asset prices is unethical. Companies are saying, "Inclusion of forest conservation in carbon markets will be effective and equitable". These are the inconvenient truth about financing on reducing deforestation through carbon trade - she added. She criticized that the valuation process is not clear, while baseline and additionality are impossible to verify. She categorized the monoculture forests as KYOTO-FOREST. She urges not to promote monoculture and calls for letting the natural forests to prosper.

Citing an example from Costa Rica, she said that carbon market has only developed there as a result of government interventions. Women suffer disproportionately from both deforestation and climate change and they own much less forest land than men, she argues. She focused on many of the popular jargons, facts and lies around them. Sharing the experiences from Paraguayan People Environment Service (PES), impacts of biodiversity offsets on Mbya Guarani community in San Rafael, she questioned whether Mbya women benefit from PES. She found women as the big loser. She claimed that due to wide-scale displacements, prostitution and exposure to HIV AIDS have gone up. In Rio, there has been agreement on emission reduction - she reiterated. She called upon to reduce emission at sources and stresses on to address the causes of deforestation.

In the open discussion, a woman from government delegation agrees on the concerns made by the speakers. She said, men have to understand gender relationship and she expresses her encouragement from the experience of Brazil that women along with men are raising their voices. One participant from U.K, sharing his working experiences in developing countries, comments that it is hard to raise women voices in rural areas of developing countries. Yianna Lambrou from FAO made the impression that gender addresses both the role of men and women, and the voices of men seem to be missing here. At household level, lots of power sharing has to happen, so gender in terms of both men and women should be represented. It is also important how men and women learn about their rights and can lobby. Ana Pinto made the comment on Lambrou's argument that in many indigenous communities there prevails community concept, not household one. One participant from ministry of environment, Indonesia, argues that women should be trained to raise their voices. Ulrike from LIFE says that women are already knowledgeable and know

what to do, but they are not heard. Thus it should be the responsibility of men to get trained about how their activities impact the environment and women's lives.

In concluding remarks, Gotelind Alber said that our lives have been taken out and markets are not the one to decide on our lives. She thanked all for their patience participation.

The presentations are available at
http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/events_list.html
(go to: Dec. 6, 10:30 to 12:30, Organiser LIFE e.V.)