

## **Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, International Women Leading Solutions on the Frontlines of Climate Change**

Women's leadership and solutions are heard while COP23 is underway. Front line and indigenous women are being impacted first and worst by climate change. We must halt climate change and protect our lands. Women need to connect more deeply. We need to lift up women, while working in collaboration with male allies. Women will not stop speaking out until we leave 80% of fossil fuels in the ground, stay below 1.5 degrees rise in global temperature, stop polluting oceans. We fight for mother earth.

Pledges to cut carbon emissions are too small. Even under Paris Accord, temperature will rise 3 degrees. We need socially just change. There will be no effective change on climate until women's ideas are acknowledged. Trump administration has been catastrophic on climate action. Deleted climate change from white house webpage. Appointed climate change deniers and is backing coal. We must fight systems of oppression. Front line communities and indigenous people need to be at the forefront of solutions. Women are 80% of climate refugees. Women are 20M out of 26M displaced by climate disasters. We are not just victims- we are solutions. Through collective ownership and localizing economies we can disrupt monopolies. Women will rise ever more boldly in defense of what we hold dear. Women bring emotional and spiritual intelligence to the conversation which is needed to break down barriers.

### **Panel 1-Women Speak from the Frontlines of Climate Change**

Reefs are being destroyed. Climate genocide is fueled by corporate greed. It has crippled our democracy. In Maldives, oil industry is taking over a protected mangrove forest to build a corporate airport. Shamelessly destroying the environment. Time is not on our side. There is no room or role for fossil fuels.

In the Amazon they are "developing" oil. Indigenous people have not been asked what development means for them. Fresh air, clean water, fertile soil, living in community is their proposal-"the living forest" proposal. Looking for legal protections of living forest areas-respect not exploit. Indigenous people have a spiritual connection to the forest.

People's lives and stories are behind all the climate statistics. Climate change disproportionately effects women. Multiple intersecting inequalities, and climate crisis is exacerbating preexisting inequalities. Women's labor provides 80% of food in Africa, but 22 out of 25 women live in poverty in Africa. Many women are hungry. Sexual exploitation is rampant in the fishing industry. Migration is a challenge for women on the forefront of climate change. Women forced to move from homes. Many cannot move across country borders. After cyclones etc, countries have to borrow more money to rebuild. Further perpetuates poverty.

In 2012 explosion in Richmond CA at refinery. Sent many people to hospital due to air quality. Company lied about toxicity of smoke. Native Americans started a movement "Idle no More".

Refinery healing walks-walked to refinery towns in solidarity with indigenous peoples (refineryhealingalks.org, indigenouswomenrising.org). Walked for clean environment, safer jobs, to speak for the animals impacted. Sacrifice zones-cities around refineries-usually low income and people of color.

### **Keynote Patricia Gualinga, leader from Pueblo of Sarayaku, Ecuador**

1400 people in her community, no roads, can only get there by river or flying in small airplanes. It is in the middle of rainforest, the most biodiverse place on the planet. Even though small, they have expelled oil companies from their territory. Took case to international court and won case for violation of human rights. No fossil fuel extraction allowed (oil and mining) which was a decision by women in their territory. Women want to defend life and mother earth. New oil concessions proposed-they are resisting and proposed a new solution. Living Forest proposal-from their vision and reality. Current solutions are based on market mechanism, not based on visions of indigenous people. Promote regeneration and protecting ecosystems. New category of conservation-no industrial extraction on their territories. Must be protected for future generations. Not willing to negotiate, they are here to protect life. This is the women's time to mobilize and resist.

### **Panel 2-Women's strategic analysis, policy and advocacy for systemic change and climate justice**

We are part of a justice, economic, and social revolution. Need to speak to the fury and the possibilities. Need to go to the core of the problem and demand something different. Need to be authentic in our truth telling. Need to have diverse bodies participating in the room. System is unjust-don't qualify for loans to clean up messes from climate change that they didn't cause. Concentrate on our own governments, need to push them to places they need to be. Need to speak about loss and damage, adaptation funds. We are in an economic crisis caused by greed. Need a UN binding treaty between countries and corporations.

Women in congress-20%, only 15 female world leaders-8 of which were first in their countries. Women are only 4% of fortune 500 CEO's. Loss of human dignity in climate disasters. Mass burials, someone buried on sidewalk after laying dead for 5 days after Katrina. Need gender equity and climate justice. Clean coal is a hypocrisy-impacts health, destroys property and planet. Time to mobilize and win.

Nissan plant in Mississippi-exposing women to chemicals, getting breast cancer. Women have to do sexual favors to get advancement. Teachers being exposed to mold. Mental health spending cut and instead spending more on private prisons. Leadership is disconnected from frontline communities. New sustainable economy, recycling, local and cooperatively owned. Jackson-zero emission and zero waste city by 2020. Build green cooperatives, and have a just transition to solar and thermal energy. Human rights budgeting. Get folks on our side, in order to make the change we want to see.

UNFCCC Women and Gender Constituency-working on gender equality, climate justice, gender justice. Encourages participation. Gap decision-added language on just transition. Have agreed to incorporate gender. Key demands: adopt a robust gender action plan, deliver on finance, plan for real ambition via the 2018 facilitative dialogue, effectively address loss and damage, implement rights-based national policies, create a rights-based platform for indigenous peoples and local communities, develop rules for community consultation and consent, break free from fossil fuels, move the money and more ([womensgenderclimate.org](http://womensgenderclimate.org)).

### **Keynote Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland**

Women have always been on the frontlines, now it is time to be at the forefront. Hope is for less struggle for women, with more leading from the front. Leadership is not without risks-161 killed this year alone defending water/land rights, indigenous people's rights. Stand in solidarity in the face of these challenges and lend a hand to women who are in need. Fiji decided gender is one of the top priorities at this COP which is new. Much progress has been made to get women this recognition. Gender Action Plan adoption is next step at this UNFCCC. Commitment to gender action is now established. Need to build on progress, and implement our plan. Not yet making enough progress on gender balance on committees and bodies-need more female members. Must bring women in the front lines into the climate decision making in both Bonn and Bula. Local communities and grassroots voices need to be heard. Too much is happening behind closed doors. Give indigenous communities a seat at the table. Many women have impediments to participation-family, money to get to meeting, visas, access to information. Empowering women is critical for effective participation. Women's participation will make for more transformative climate action. Be the change you want to see in the world.

### **Panel 3-Women's leadership and solutions in facing impacts of climate change.**

Women are most powerful in communal settings. People in Africa are on perpetual food aid. It's not the way they should be living-they used to sustain themselves. Need to be able to feed themselves and rejuvenate their land. Africa feels the effects of climate change-hunger, flash flooding. Need to rebuild the soil, bring carbon back into the soil. Need strategies to scale up solutions-grow locally, a regenerative agriculture.

Climate change has destroyed people's homes, displaced thousands, results in suicides. Need fossil fuel divestment-to stigmatize the industry. Economic boycott of an immoral industry. Have started divestment campaigns on a number of college campuses in US. Now going global. Started as a youth movement, awaken new generation to stand together and fight for a world that works for people and not for the fossil fuel elite.

Climate change is everywhere, including Uganda. Oxfam initially encouraged her to tell her story. People are dying in Uganda. No wood, no food, people go to sleep hungry including children. Drought has been present for a long time. People consume bad food and end up dying. Children are beaten for stealing food, killed. Water is contaminated. They go talk and lobby the government, go door to door. They have started with tree planting and kitchen

gardens. Climate change finance should go to the people. Change is a process, and together we can.

Germany still doing coal mining-many people are protesting. 42% of electricity is from coal in Germany. People are being marginalized, oppressed-must fight patriarchy and capitalism. Civil disobedience has become their mechanism-lay in front of coal trucks. Climate justice is about gender justice.

### **Report from International Rights of Nature Tribunal in Bonn**

Nov 7-8 in Bonn, 60 presenters, judges, and an audience to put on a trial to have rights of nature in law. Turns legal system upside down. Recognize earth and respect natural laws. Ecuador and Bolivia have rights of nature laws in their constitutions. Rivers and regions have been given rights in various places. Tribe in US is going to outlaw fracking on tribal lands. It's time for the rights of mother earth to be represented.

### **Call to Action for the Protection and Rights of Defenders of the Land**

What do we want? Climate justice. When do we want it? Now. Group photo (look for me in the back!)

### **Bianca Jagger, Activist and former wife of Mick**

Women hold few positions of power. But women do a majority of the work at home. Women do 3 out of every 5 hours of unpaid labor. Projections show the gender pay gap won't be closed for another 170 years. Must do everything we can to promote gender equality. Empower women and girls, eliminate violence, effect change, eradicate poverty. Women are the hard-working, invisible backbone of society. Yet their voices are not heard. The time has come for us to be heard. Women are more vulnerable to climate change. Women are 14x more likely to die or be injured during a weather disaster. In addition, they suffer loss of homes, livelihood, with increasing workload after the event. Poor women suffer the most. We need to see indigenous people as powerful agents of change. They are a critical part of the solution. They account for 50% of world population and care for 80% of planet's biodiversity. Indigenous women are taking action on climate change. They need a seat at negotiating table at COP. UNFCCC has not equally represented women on its bodies. We need to achieve gender equality, advance human rights based policy and action. It is urgent for us to act now.