

### **Mobilising the voices of the most affected towards Paris**

It has become abundantly clear that governments and corporations would rather the world experience catastrophic climate change than dismantle the economic systems causing the problem. Every day new evidence is provided that we are perilously close to the tipping points that will make the world uninhabitable.

Climate change affects everyone but perversely impacts disproportionately on those who are the least responsible – women of the global south. Developed countries, with the largest historical responsibility for climate change, are shielded from its impacts due to their access to wealth, technology and resources. This disparity has created deep and deadly injustice.

The global dominance of market economics, or neo-liberal capitalism, has resulted in deepened inequalities, wide-spread human rights violations, environmental degradation and exacerbated the vulnerability of the economically poor, particularly women, to impacts of climate change.

In the lead up to COP21 in Paris those who contribute the least to climate change but shoulder the consequences, will increase demands for climate justice. Central to their demands is the clear need for rich countries with historical responsibility to act first and fast to both halt climate change and support affected communities to adapt.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties (COP), the supreme body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is scheduled from November 30 to December 11 2015 in Paris, France. This COP 21 is expected to produce a new legally binding climate agreement for the post-2020 period, commonly referred as the “Paris agreement”.

The history of the international climate negotiations is a depressing one. These negotiations illustrate the erosion in the principle of international solidarity – the obligations states have to act collectively in the interests of humanity globally. Since the establishment of the UNFCCC, greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 60%. The current stage of the negotiations for the Paris agreement looks bleak as developed countries seek to avoid their historical responsibilities rather than working towards a fair and ambitious agreement.

Globally democracy is in terminal decline. Governments are rarely accountable to their own constituents, let alone those outside of their borders. Governments appear to be more concerned about the interests of multi-national corporations who seek to weaken the agenda and profit from climate change than with their constituents. The only way to shift governments now will be through the demonstration of collective power.

APWLD and its members will be mobilised to represent and stand for the most affected who are already facing dire impacts of climate change, yet who have contributed the least to global warming. As women are among the most affected by the impacts of climate change, this mobilisation is putting women in a prominent place. The call for climate justice is also the call for gender justice. However, all affected people are welcome and encouraged to join and rally in this mobilisation, including indigenous people, migrants, youth, local people, etc. This mobilisation includes everyone that wants to take back power in the hands of the people, to pursue a just and equitable society, and to demand a new model of development based on development justice. Women and other affected communities at the frontlines of climate change demand climate justice now! We must see an agreement that has gender equality as a core principle. But we won't accept an inequitable, profit driven agreement. There can be no gender equality on a dead planet!

### **Event Plan**

APWLD's members will be mobilized at the national level, where communities are affected. The focus will be on affected communities demanding action from culprits – developed countries and corporations. The action will take place in front of OECD country embassies or corporations with strong messages about climate justice. This mobilisation aims to show that the power of the people can challenge the current system through civil disobedience, strikes and mass mobilization.

1. Date: optional (preference given to November 28, 29, 30)
2. Time: Optional (maybe lunch hours or another time with traffic in and out)
3. Duration: Optional
4. Strategy: Actions that highlight the inequity and injustice of climate change. Most affected people to speak. Actions can have visual representations of the inequity between countries and those caused by corporations. Example – A guideline to produce a giant foot will be provided. The foot will be x number of times larger than the emissions of the USA (i.e. in Nepal the foot will be 175 feet – it will represent an average US foot. The Nepal foot will be one foot. Inside GDP per capita). Flash mobs or other actions can be included. Requires a media 'stunt'.
  - a) Mapping of other plans in each country. If other groups are mobilizing this can be merged.
  - b) Formation of an organizing committee in each country with a focal person for each embassy

- c) Assessment of security situation for each embassy and lay out of the strategy – flash strike or rallying and converging
- d) Ideas on creative and visible ways of striking – open
- e) Striking slogan lines (region and country-specific based on the theme of the key message)
- f) Finding out potential embassies in each country and making a final list
- g) Each regional organization to sketch a final plan for mobilization and share
- h) Development of a tool-kit for the action including flash mobilisations, protests, rallies and sit-ins.

### **Key Message**

Not only should the Paris agreement have gender equality and women's human rights at its core, but it must address the historical responsibility of developed countries and corporations and challenge the very foundations of the economic model causing climate change. Women living in the global South who have contributed least to climate change are the ones bearing the most its impacts. Climate change is an issue of social justice - it violates the human rights of people to live in safe and clean environment. The call for climate justice is not only to drastically curb the carbon emission but it is also about creating sustainable futures where human rights and gender equality will be realities. It is not only about ensuring a sustainable planet but also a fair one, where the majority is not the victim of inequalities created by the few rich and elite who control the world economy. The perpetrators of climate change should urgently act so that millions of women around the world do not have to worry about surviving or suffer post disaster exploitations induced by climate change. This is a global call for ending the pursuit of selfish economic growth which continues to marginalised millions of women and men and which currently has us on a pathway of a temperature rise of 4 °C by 2100. Now is the time for system change.

### **Importance of protesting in front of places that symbolises the power of the responsible of the crisis**

The events will occur in places that challenge industries, corporations and developed countries' governments such as corporate headquarters, areas impacted by mining, industry or pollution as well as embassies and consulates of the most responsible countries of the climate crisis (mainly the US, but also Canada, Australia and the EU).

Corporate headquarters - 97% percentage of scientists agrees that climate change is caused by human induced activities – and the extractive industries depleting fossil fuels and natural resources are the biggest culprits. By protesting in front of the head offices of the most culpable transnational corporations we can highlight their responsibility in climate change.

Historic Landmarks – Historic landmarks around the cities are either symbolic representation of victory against injustice and inequalities or are placed in admiration of those who fought tirelessly for the betterment of their people. Protesting against climate change at historical landmarks will symbolize the power of climate justice movement over injustices and inequalities created by climate change and its perpetrators.

Mining/Industrial areas - These are the living examples of the exploitation of natural resources; many are established by evicting people and land grabbing. These are the source of pollution that degrades the environment and creates inequality. Thus, staging a protest in such areas would send a strong message about the harmful impacts of these archetypes of our extractive development model.

Developed countries' embassies – Protesting in front of developed country embassies means directly calling to their leaders to take responsibility in addressing the climate crisis. Embassies are established with a mission to ensure a bilateral relationship between two countries. They also serve as the contact point between the leaders of the countries and as well as they help keeping both parties informed about each country's situations. Strikes in front of the foreign embassies mean directly challenging the developed countries to respect and ensure climate justice. This not only will create an opportunity to voice out the demands of the people who cannot directly participate to the COP 21 but also help to create a global climate justice movement to keep the momentum alive.

The high regard embassies get from the host nations and its institutions make them a strategic point to mobilize climate women's strike. Mobilising and including creative stunts in front of embassies would also generate a lot of media attention.

### **Target Audience**

Diplomats of developed countries, media (print, TV and social media), national political leaders, CSOs, students, local people.

### **Why on at the end of November?**

November 30 is the starting day of COP 21 that will last two weeks. Since world leaders are expected to sign a new global climate agreement, it is essential to start to pressure them, and especially developed countries governments who are the most responsible for climate change. The aim of "Mobilising the voices of the most affected towards Paris" is to bring the voices of the women and the most affected to the frontline of the climate justice movement and climate

negotiations. We are convinced that we need to hear the stories of the ones for whom climate change is an issue of mere survival.