

CSW66 PRESS RELEASE

Feminist Civil Society Groups Demand Urgent Climate Action as the UN Commission on the Status of Women Closes

Governments must move beyond empty promises and false solutions towards accountability and transformative action to address climate change.

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Feminist Civil Society groups including young feminists expressed deep concerns at the lack of progress towards advancing gender equality in the context of climate change and environment as the 66th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) came to a close late on 25 March. “It’s not enough for Global North countries like the United States, Australia, and countries in the European Union to simply recognise the gendered impacts of climate change,” said Noelene Nabulivou from DIVA for Equality, Fiji. “They must commit to recognising their historic responsibility to address issues like extractivism, climate financing and debt justice and to mitigate the socio-economic and environmental loss and damage caused by climate change.” “Although the term ‘climate justice’ appears in the text, it is considered as a concept valid only for some, suggesting it’s rather an opinion. It is pivotal for climate justice to be the basis of all actions. Coming from one of the most affected areas....our lives depend on it,” said Ayshka from Fridays For Future MAPA.

“[CSW66] was also a missed opportunity to carry forward the discussion on climate finance, especially for loss and damage, which would guarantee direct access to those on the ground who have already been bearing the cost of climate change from historical emissions,” said Wanun Permpibul of Climate Watch Thailand. “Addressing emissions reductions through false solutions like net zero will only delay the mitigation, which will result in more loss and damage, and will put women’s human rights at risk,” she added.

While the ambition of this year’s CSW fell short due to intense push back from some governments on women’s human rights and gender equality and others on financing, debt and loss and damage, the agreed conclusions made some forward strides. For the first time in its history, CSW made an explicit connection between sexual and reproductive health and rights, and climate justice.

Feminist civil society groups expressed that youth participation is still far from ideal. “We are glad to see young people being given

space, however, Youth Delegates of Member States are usually from the Global North and we hope more youth in all their diversity from the Global South are given spaces for meaningful engagement in the coming years. (...) Space for Civil Society has not yet opened up to its full and effective extent, and this will ultimately impact the engagement of younger and future generations in the years to come,” said Alma Rondanini, National Gender Youth Advocate (NGYA).

The feminist groups also raised concerns about shrinking space for civil society, intensified with COVID, especially for climate frontline communities, to engage directly with states, share information and expertise and keep them accountable to their commitments. As the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to gender equality and empowerment of women, the CSW66 was unfortunately disconnected from women and girls in all their diversity, especially climate frontline communities from the Global South.

“The negotiation rejected the recognition of environmental women human rights defenders who are at the forefront of fighting the climate crisis and injustices. If the future CSW and other intergovernmental processes such as COP27 are to succeed, the only way is to institutionalize meaningful and democratic participation of civil society with the actual power to shape the global policies and frameworks,” said Misun Woo, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development.

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