



Climate, gender and education

Warsaw, 16 November 2013

Side event organised by the UN CSD Caucus and the WEEC Network at COP19

(Text if the video message)



First of all, I would like to thank UN CSD Education Caucus for this first collaboration between the Caucus and the worldwide environmental education network organising the world congresses since 2003.

Therefore, this year, with the 7th WEEC, we celebrated in Marrakech, Morocco, 10 years of Congresses that have always had broad participation from all continents.

We are already working on the Congresses for the years ahead and we hope to continue to be useful and better able to contribute to the growing effectiveness of formal, non-formal, and informal educational

systems as regards the themes of the environment and sustainability.

My greetings to all the participants at this side event at the conference and my apologies for not being able to attend.

The meeting will provide useful guidelines for education on global warming, its mitigation and adaptation.

As the terrible cyclone in eastern Asia shows us, the theme is crucial and highly transversal because climate has a huge impact on biodiversity, water, food, energy, shortly on all natural resources and on all our life.

There is in the world a sad unacceptable gender inequality, women are still the weak and exploited side of humankind. As we know, women have in charge to manage many natural resources and a lot of tasks to do at home and in their local community, so they are the most important victims of climate change. Women are most vulnerable, jeopardized by food insecurity, inadequate shelter and health deterioration, as children or the sick and older persons.

Education on climate change is in this case a **double challenge**:

- the **first** challenge are the interests of lobbies as oil companies, the boiled frog syndrome, the business linked to adaptation and so on; a lot of people, especially in developed countries and especially in Europe are blind and deaf face the global warming; polluters pay pseudo-scientists, spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year on misleading advertisements in the mass media, buy politicians and officials, hire lobbyists in the Parliaments; mass media ignore or under estimate the problem;

- but the **second** one is the role of women in the fight against greenhouses gas emissions that is also a fight against the social inequality, the male power, the missing rights, stereotypes and prejudices, the global injustice.

So, we depend mostly on women for the resilience, for reducing the impact of humankind on the Planet and for reducing our growing ecological footprint.

Of course, education can improve the participation of women, their leadership in communities, enhancing capacities and abilities and in this way it can also improve the common engagement for a better future: also the men have to be educated on the gender balance and on the rights and role of women.

Environmental and sustainability education have to accelerate and to increase any efforts of networking, to develop better educational tools, to build strongest relationships and partnerships, for reaching decision makers and all people, for putting climate and socio-ecological challenges at the centre, for building a better understanding of the interrelated phenomena humankind influence.

Finally, the issue "climate-gender-education" is an issue able to transform and to improve all our initiatives and our action.