

30 April 2012

STATEMENT BY the WOMEN's MAJOR GROUP

On the occasion of the meeting of the Rio+20 Bureau with Major Groups

Dear members of the Bureau, delegates,

My name is Tess Vistro of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, I come from the Philippines. I am speaking in behalf of the women major group,

1. First, On Gender equality and women's empowerment

Countries where women and men have more equal status and opportunities are better able to move on the path of sustainable development. And we know that women in most countries face barriers both in the public and private spheres, and that we need to break down these barriers.

But we also know that many countries are working hard to achieve gender equality. We know there are successes achieved in bringing women into significant decision making positions, but much more needs to be done to improve the lives of women worldwide, particularly in developing countries, where the face of poverty and hunger continue to be the face of a woman.

The aim of the Rio+20 summit is to move implementation forward, then it is a key that we set some concrete targets, as has been done for example in Millennium Development Goal 3, to create political will for implementation.

Concretely, we are calling on governments to support language which is now in CST 102 bis, **to support national measures to increase the number of women in leadership positions to at least 40%, with the aim of reaching parity.**

We should give women worldwide an opportunity to participate fully in sustainable development.

If we cannot include concrete targets in this document, there is really no need to go to Rio.

2. Second, on Women's rights to basic services

Another instrument for the rights of women we want to see in the final document is the social protection floor. Women carry a disproportionate burden of the unpaid care work, are in the majority working as unpaid work, in the informal and precarious sectors and in many countries still face discriminatory laws.

In some countries like Brazil, 90% of the beneficiaries of the social protection floor instruments are women.

For us this an important instrument for the implementation of the right to basic services such as health, food, water, housing, energy and education.

We call on government to support stronger language on the global protection floor initiative

3. Our third – and final point – is on women’s rights and safeguards in the face of harmful and destructive commercial activities, in particular focussing on mining and unconventional gas activities.

It is common knowledge that the oil, gas, and mining industries have not helped the poorest people in developing countries, they have often made them worse off.

Mining and extractive industries are the cause of great pollution, damage, ill-health, and even deaths and violence, of which women and children are often victims.

The current proposals for the paragraph CST 97 on mining are very unbalanced.

We call on governments to:

- Initiate a global framework to reduce and repair damage from mining and extractive industries, and assure there are no negative impacts on local communities and women
- Create a global fund to support developing countries in clean-up and rehabilitation of degraded mining sites.

Thank you - and know that the women of the world are counting on you!