

## Report on the UN Climate conference (COP23) in Bonn-Germany on Nov 2017

### Request for WIZO NGO representation

#### **Keywords: Climate change, Gender effects, Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

In November, I was invited as private citizens to attend the NGO part of the 23rd Climate Conference by the UNFCCC Gender Day in Bonn.

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is an international environmental treaty which has the goal to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions. The parties to the convention meet annually since 1995 in Conferences of the Parties (COP) to assess progress on climate change issues.

The Paris Agreement (COP 21) was adopted in 2015, governing emission reductions below two degrees Celsius, the **financing of climate measures starting 2020** onwards and acknowledged the necessity of gender equality.

At this year's Climate Conference (COP 23) in Bonn/Germany the goal was to set common measures for each country's contribution to cut emissions (NDCs) as well as develop the necessary framework regulations. Already in Paris it had been agreed that **climate change reduction measures must consider gender effects**.



#### **Gender Day at the Climate Conference and 'Gender Action Plan' agreement**

Prior to the Gender Day, a two-day Gender and Climate Change workshop was established to develop elements of a 'Gender Action Plan' GAP. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the workgroup sessions, as I was accredited as a NGO participant.

I attended the Gender Day at the COP23. It started with breakfast and a high-level meeting on making 'The economic case for gender responsive climate action'. Later the day the first ever **Gender Action Plan to the UNFCCC** was finally agreed and adopted in Bonn. Many NGO's have been supporting member, and worked for several years to make this happen. The overall goal of the Gender Action Plan is to support and enhance the implementation of the gender-related decisions. The GAP consists of **five priorities areas**:

1. Enhance the gender understanding and expertise of stakeholders
2. Equal and meaningful participation of women
3. Strengthen the integration of gender considerations within the work of UNFCCC bodies
4. Ensure the promotion gender equality
5. Improve tracking in relation to the implementation

The final agreement of the Gender Action Plan was presented on November 15th at the Market Place of the conference and celebrated by the stakeholders in the evening. I had the pleasure of joining the celebration in the evening with indigenous and modern dance celebrations joined by people from all over the world. During the celebration I had the opportunity to have very interesting conversation with members of the e.g. 'Women's Environment & Development Organization' WeDO and learned about their activities during the year.

### Why is a Gender Action plan important?

For myself I have only become aware of the extend of how women are much more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, while attending one of the daily caucus organized by '**The Women and Gender Constituency**' WGC (which WIZO might consider to be member organizations). Because of their lower social status, access and control over resources women are **more impacted from climate change** in many countries. This shows in the Gender differences of death tolls from natural disasters in correlation to women's economic and social rights in those affected countries.

### The Israeli-Palestinian conflict within Climate Change agreements

Just as gender related issues have been considered at the COP 23 in Bonn, the acknowledgement of **human rights related measures** are getting more and more attention within the UNFCCC agreements. This emphasizes a further political aspect to the already **negative attitude towards Israel** within the UN.

In **March 2016**, the **Palestinian Authority** upgraded its status from "Observer" to "Party" to the UNFCCC, **becoming its 197th member**. Besides the symbolic importance, the full membership the Palestinian Authority has now **a further opportunity to advance their interests** in international talks and access to a set of resources previously precluded.

One further side note I would like to share:

#### Does climate change contribute to violence and war?

On one of the many talks offered at the conference it was pointed out that Climate change acts as thread multiplier for exiting conflicts and acting as an accelerator for already unstable places. In e.g. Syria where the prolonged draughts of 2011 onwards is an underlying factor in aggravating food insecurities in the region and forcing people to move to the cities. While drought is not the only cause of the Syrian conflict, the idea is that it has helped drive up social unrest.

John Kerry pointed out at a speech this week in University in Virginia: "It's not a coincidence that immediately prior to the civil war in Syria, the country experienced its worst drought on record. As many as 1.5 million people migrated from Syria's farms to its cities, intensifying the political unrest that was just beginning to roil and boil in the region".

### Conclusion

Climate Change resolutions will have increasing significance in future political, economic and social agreements. For that reason, I consider it of importance for the Women's International Zionist Organization to be present as a NGO and to voice Israel interests at future conferences. Please consider

- **becoming a member** of the '**The Women and Gender Constituency**' WGC organization, one of the nine stakeholder groups of the UNFCCC. WGC is responsible of organizing the NGO Meeting for the Climate Conference (<http://womengenderclimate.org/about-us/>)
- **Accrediting WIZO as a NGO to the UNFCCC**  
The UNFCCC secretariat is based in Bonn, Germany.