



Solidarity with women of the world facing multiple crises!

The month of March 2022, widely known as Women's Month, began under the looming shadow of two major events that shook the world – the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February and the release of the 2022 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that warns of the devastating consequences of inaction and our collective failure to address the climate crisis.

Today we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and with all women living in situations of conflict, suffering the costs of political violence, fighting for freedom and survival amidst the most difficult circumstances.

We are also painfully reminded that the threats to our lives and security come in many forms, some expose entire communities, nations and ecosystems to constant danger and hazards way beyond their control – the climate crisis is one such threat.

Today we sound the alarm once more on the state of climate emergency and struggle together with the peoples of the Global South who suffer the worst impacts of a climate crisis not of their own making. And once again we salute the women who, in the face of multiple crises, stand in the frontlines of multiple fights – for survival, for an end to inequalities and tyranny, for economic and climate justice.

As we mark International Women's Day, we affirm our resolute commitment to fight the multiple crises - the economic recessions and heavier debt burdens, climate breakdown, and conflict and violence - and build a better world. As in other regions, these worldwide problems have exacerbated entrenched inequalities, setting the clock back on what little progress has been made on gender equality and development for women and their families and communities.

Evidence underscores that women are facing more poverty, violence, disadvantage, marginalization and discrimination more than any group of people:

- Women have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as carers, mothers, healthcare workers, migrant or domestic workers, etc. In low-income countries, where women faced precarious livelihoods and are excluded from quality healthcare and education, women faced unemployment, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, reduced access to sexual and reproductive health, and increased unpaid care and domestic work. Some 47 million women and girls have been pushed into extreme poverty since the outbreak of Covid-19. It is predicted that there will be up to 7 million unintended pregnancies worldwide due to Covid-19 and its measures. The pandemic has also caused increased levels of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Data shows that domestic violence has intensified since lockdown restrictions were implemented, creating a shadow pandemic in several countries.
- Women are worst hit by the ballooning debt burden of countries of the South. Women's care labors and economic contributions, both paid and unpaid, have served as a buffer against greater socio-economic hardships, and always with dire consequences for their health and well-being, education, mobility, incomes and many other human rights. The debt crisis intensifies these conditions. As austerity conditions are imposed in exchange for loans, and fiscal space narrows further, countries of the South are forced to trade off people's well-being for creditworthiness, by continuing debt service payments in the face of urgent survival needs.

Across low and middle income countries, new borrowings piled on top of previously elevated external debt levels and swelled to \$8.7 trillion in 2020 alone. Debt "relief" solutions promoted by international financial institutions, the G20 and Paris Club such as the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework served to deepen further the debt pit and increase inequality. Current estimates project even higher economic losses worldwide of \$13.8 trillion by 2024, but the impacts will be more harsh and burdensome for countries of the South.

- **Women's rights and resilience in the face of multiple crises are severely undermined by poor access to food, water, health, education and other public services that have been grossly underfunded for many years. The near-collapse of public health services under the pandemic is the result of decades of prioritization of payments of unsustainable and illegitimate debt, austerity measures, mismanagement and corruption, government indifference and fundamentally flawed fiscal and tax systems.**

Tax abuses by corporations and the elite and other types of illicit financial flows (IFFs) have remained unchecked, robbing public coffers of potential revenues needed to finance and upgrade the quality of public services and make them available especially to women and marginalized communities. Instead of increasing domestic revenues by fairly taxing the income and wealth of corporations and billionaires, many governments in Asia, as in other countries in the South, have increasingly relied on indirect taxes like VAT and GST, imposing unjust tax burdens on ordinary people.

Using the pandemic as an excuse, many governments are fast tracking tax reforms to protect the profit driven interests of corporations on the one hand, and expanding indirect taxes on the other, squeezing out more taxes from ordinary people.

These have devastating consequences for women, especially those living in impoverished and marginalized communities, who shell out a disproportionate share of their meager incomes to pay for essential commodities. Moreover, many tax systems in Asia bear the marks of collective histories of colonization and deeply embedded patriarchal norms and structures, reflecting elite and gender biases that reinforce inequalities and exacerbate the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination women face everyday.

- **Women are the most impacted by climate change being the majority of the world's poor and marginalized. Seventy percent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women. With their lower incomes and less access to education and information, women are least able to adapt to, or manage, climate-related risks to their crops and livestock and to recover from climate-related disasters. In many poor communities that are dependent on natural resources, women – being the primary providers of food, water and fuel – must work harder to provide food and collect water and fuel in times of drought and climate-induced disasters.**

Furthermore, women's domestic and care work, as well as cultural restrictions on mobility, make women more vulnerable during natural disasters. Figures indicate that 80 percent of people displaced by climate change are women. Poor women are also 14 times as likely to die from a climate disaster compared to men.

And yet, six years after governments worldwide adopted the Paris goal of stabilizing global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, they are failing to translate this commitment to targets and actions consistent with their fairshares and full obligations in towards phasing out of fossil fuel energy, transforming industries and agriculture away from highly polluting, GHG emitting and destructive systems, and pursuing ecological restoration.

We are running out of time to stop climate catastrophe. Scientists have already warned that actions within this decade will determine if this goal will remain within reach.



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We join women and peoples movements in fighting for:

- **Debt cancellation**, starting with patently illegitimate debts that were incurred in our name but violated human rights, destroyed the environment and enriched a few, to free up funds for greater social spending in the midst of the multiple crises. It is a decisive step towards a gender-just, sustainable economic rebuilding.
- **Ending tax abuses** by corporations and wealthy individuals, and the **adoption of progressive tax policies** that fairly and sharply tax the income and wealth of corporations and billionaires, thus increasing capacities for domestic revenue mobilization; **Systemic reforms in fiscal systems** to reflect the principle of 'people before profit,' recognize and reward unpaid care work, increase public financing of essential services, and rechannel public funds away from wasteful and harmful projects.
- Governments, corporations and financial institutions deliver their actions and **fair share of climate obligations**, **Rejection of false solutions** and technologies that are detrimental to people and communities, especially women, to the environment and climate systems. And for northern governments to provide **adequate climate finance** as part of their **reparations for the huge climate debt** they owe the people most affected by the climate crisis.
- **System change through people-centered and gender-just solutions** that includes a rapid, just transition of energy systems away from fossil fuels and other harmful energy, empowering people, communities and women to adapt and build resilience in the face of intensifying and already irreversible impacts of climate change and deal with massive loss and damage, transforming financial, fiscal and economic policies, and building modes of extraction, production, distribution and consumption that are aligned within the limits of the planet and gives primacy to the rights and needs of peoples, including of women.



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Signatories

Regional Organizations

Focus on the Global South

Migrant Forum in Asia

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
(SAAPE)

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

Coastal Livelihood and Environmental
Action Network (CLEAN Bangladesh)

Equity BD

Thailand

Climate Watch Thailand

Forests and Farmers Foundation

Women's Alliance for Climate Justice

Philippines

Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)

Bulig Pilipinas

Kanlungan Centre Foundation

Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Mga Maralita ng
Lungsod (KPML)

Freedom from Debt Coalition

GITIB Incorporated

Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
(GAIA) Philippines

Metro East Labor Federation

ORIAN Women's Movement

Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM)

Philippine Movement for Climate Justice

SANLAKAS

Socialista

Solidarity of Unions in the Philippines for
Empowerment and Reform

WomanHealth Philippines

Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO)

Indonesia

Aksi! for gender, social and economic justice

KRUHA

(People's Coalition for the Right to Water)

Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia

(WALHI/ Friends of The Earth - Indonesia)

Sawit Watch

Solidaritas Perempuan

(Women's Solidarity for Human Rights)

India

All-India Women Hawkers Federation
(AIWHF)

Environics Trust

Himalaya Niti Abhiyan (HNA)

Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)

mines, minerals & People (mmp)

National Hawker Federation (NHF)

Nepal

All Nepal Women's Assembly (ANWA)

Digo Bikas Institute (DBI)

Jagaran Nepal

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

Pakistan

Crofter Foundation Pakistan

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC)

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)

Sri Lanka

Center for Environment Justice (CEJ)