

Women Demand More Action on Climate Change

Tuesday, 14th May 2007 saw the launch of the Women's Manifesto on Climate Change, jointly produced by the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) and Women's Environmental Network (WEN).

Did you know that globally, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to our different social roles and status? A recent survey demonstrates that in the UK and in other developed countries, increasing costs for energy, transport, healthcare and nutrition are likely to affect women, including single mothers, more than men.

- In developing countries, women are already suffering disproportionately more as a consequence of climate change:
- 70% of the world's poor, who are far more vulnerable to environmental damage, are women;
- 85% of people who die from climate-induced disasters are women.
- The Women & Climate Change survey conducted by NFWI/WEN of more than 500 women (amazingly, the first ever) has found that women care greatly about environmental issues, and as the primary household purchasers and primary carers, we have a key role in tackling climate change as consumers, educators and 'change agents'. Of the decisions made by women within the home, 93% of household food, 84% of clothing, 82% of household products, 75% of holidays, 74% of home furnishings and 61% of car purchases are made by women.

The survey demonstrates that 80% of women are very concerned about climate change (compare this with a recent EMAP survey findings of 84% women, but only 64% men) and 75% are apprehensive that government action to tackle climate change will not be taken soon enough.

According to the Women & Climate Change survey, what women of the UK want most is:

- Much more action in tackling climate change.
 - 97% believe the Government and industry are not doing enough.
 - Top priorities for action –
 - 86% demand the Government to invest in more renewable energy
 - 86% want manufacturers to design more environmentally friendly products
 - 81% demand tougher carbon reduction targets
- More help and guidance to reduce our impact on the environment:
 - 85% want more green products and green labelling of goods
 - 85% want lower prices for environmentally friendly products
 - 82% more government grants and incentives to reduce carbon emissions
- More women's involvement in UK Government (87%) and international policy making (86%), to find solutions to climate change.
- Greater representation of women in industry boardrooms (79%) and scientific careers (78%) to address climate change issues from a women's perspective, and as MP's (74%)

Remarkably, 94% have already begun to make lifestyle changes and are willing to do more in the future. As Penney Poyzer pointed out at the launch, behavioural change on individual level is crucial, and what is clearly demonstrated by this report is that the women of this country have the will to tackle climate change. What is needed now is the way.

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