



# WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2022

**TOWARDS A RESILIENT PLANET:  
ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FUTURE**

February 16-18, 2022 (Virtual)



## Women Leadership and our Common Future

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### PLENARY SESSION: SUMMARY

Virtual Venue: Gir

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World Sustainable Development Summit (2022), Women Leadership and our Common Future, Summary, New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute.

# Plenary Session

## About the Session

As we reeled under the impacts of an unprecedented virus that took the world by storm, our eyes and hopes were fixed on our leaders and how they would navigate us through the crisis. In this unforeseen test of strength, fortitude, commitment and leadership, a certain section of the society fared significantly better than others. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly calls for ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. Women have led sustainable development actions as activists, advocates and scientists and yet, men outpace women in leadership roles across every sector—corporate, non-profit, government, politics, law, education, and security establishments. In this session, our efforts are directed towards facilitating a platform with a strong panel of women leaders from across the globe to come together and deliberate on the path to a sustainable future for all genders, across all sections of society. Our discussions revolved around ways to address the many challenges confronting women in leadership positions, including poor access to social and economic capital, constraining gender culture, paucity of role models/mentors, and inadequate positive attitudes about their own personal capacities.

## Speakers

### Moderator

- Dr Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI

### Co-moderator

- Mr Shreyas Joshi, Young Professional, TERI

### Leadership Address

- Prof Laurence Tubiana, Chief Executive Officer, European Climate Foundation
- Ms Rachel Kyte, Dean, Fletcher School, Tufts University
- Ms Helen Clarkson, Chief Executive Officer, Climate Group
- Ms Kate Hampton, Chief Executive Officer, Children's Investment Fund Foundation
- Ms Mercy Wanja Karunditu, Deputy Executive Director, The Green Belt Movement
- Ms Xiye Bastida, Co-founder, Re-Earth Initiative

## Disclaimer

The text of the addresses is based on auto-generated transcript from YouTube. Minor edits were made on grammar and spelling. The exact wording of the discussion can be accessed from YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/EqtIqq6Ebe8>.

## Actionable Messages

**Message 1:** There is a need to include diversity in the overall understanding of risk because on one hand, this will help in understanding how risk impacts different members within society differently, and on the other hand, it gives a synthetic view of risk in order to be able to calibrate our response correctly.

**Message 2:** Structural changes are important. While individual action is very crucial, both in climate crisis and in terms of diversity, but with the current systems stacked against us, individual actions are not going to get us to our goals on their own. For instance, there is a need to monitor changes in not just the uptake of higher education but what women are studying and specializing in, when and if they get to university.

**Message 3:** There is a need to invest in asset classes that women and girls can lead and direct. So, what is recognized as value is different when women are in the room, what is recognized as risk is different when women are in the room, and this differentiated assessment of value and of risk is going to be crucial in solving climate change.

**Message 4:** Currently, there exists lack of training and capacity building on climate change issues, which are highly technical, and needs to be unpacked, especially for grassroots women. This unpacked information also needs to be accessible to them. This will help women in breaking the cultural barriers that still exist in Africa, and assume leadership roles.

**Message 5:** Any decision that is made, it should be looked at from the lens of seventh generation principle, i.e. take in the wisdom of seven generations to ensure stability of the future seven generations. The current system thinks in terms of quarterly reports, or the next semester in school, which is very short term.

## Making Words Count @WSDS 2022

“ You have to take everyone with you and also understand their problems and be more caring towards their own colleagues and their families. These virtues are very much ingrained in femininity; thus, the world looks up to its phenomenal woman for an effective and creative response to environmental issues that the world is facing today, and to contribute to saving our planet and ensuring that we hand over a liveable and safe world to our future generations.

**Dr Vibha Dhawan**  
**Director General, The Energy and Resources Institute**

“ One of our biggest fallacies in gender and climate discourse has been that either elevating people to the status of heroes or relegating them to that of being mere victims. This dichotomy perhaps often leads to the blurring of nuances and that uniqueness of gendered experiences that exists even within the female identity.

**Mr Shreyas Joshi**  
**Young Professional, The Energy and Resources Institute**

“ The impact of climate change reinforces existing social inequality, which means women are more affected, and are more vulnerable to conflict. The way to break these structural patterns is by working to create new ones, ones where women are structurally represented in the decision-making process at all levels.

**Prof Laurence Tubiana**  
**Chief Executive Officer, European Climate Foundation**

“ There is a tone deafness to much of our politics, and too much of our leadership have not made progress in their gender balance, within boardrooms or within C-suites of global companies certainly within the financial sector. We have not made progress enough in elected representative chambers in parliaments around the world and so if we do not yet have that synthesized view of risk then how are we going to make the right choices and how to move forward.

**Ms Rachel Kyte,**  
**Dean, Fletcher School, Tufts University**

“ We do need individual action both in climate crisis and regards to diversity but while the systems are stacked against us, individual actions are not going to get us there on their own. So do that work because you want to, but bring your energy and your power to dismantling the organizational and structural issues that we face.

**Ms Helen Clarkson**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Climate Group**

“ We hear the phrase intersectionality a lot and yet much of the world continues to design solutions in silos and this is because we do not put the women and girls at the heart of decision making and see the world from their perspective. Investment by women and girls is actually going to accelerate our recovery and our resilience investment in women and girls.

**Ms Kate Hampton,**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Children's Investment Fund Foundation**

“ The multi-stakeholder's forum is to focus on their behavioural changes and mindset and also to provide alternatives. Indigenous knowledge is a way to bring local solutions and to refine some of the knowledge that we previously had, and has since been forgotten, and also issues around technological transformation to ensure that we bring technologies that will help communities and progress.

**Ms Mercy Wanja Karunditu,**  
**Deputy Executive Director, The Green Belt Movement**

“ We are the most connected generation and the climate movement is the most connected movement that has ever happened because of globalization, because of technology. It is important to consciously bring in voices that you have never heard before, voices that are not just on western political thought.

**Ms Xiye Bastida,**  
**Co-founder, Re-Earth Initiative**

## Narrative

### **Moderator**

***Dr Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI***

Women have this responsibility or leadership that inspires and enables the next generation. The scenario has totally changed, and it is basically that you have to take everyone with you and also understand their problems and be more caring towards their own colleagues and their families and so on. I think everyone sharing this virtual stage today would agree these virtues are very much ingrained in femininity, thus the world looks up to its phenomenal woman for an effective and creative response to environmental issues that the world is facing today and to contribute to saving our planet and ensuring that we hand over a liveable and safe world to our future generations. And again, if you look at how the societies have changed over the past few years; in many of the developing countries, it was mere survival. Asia and Africa, it was how do you ensure that there is no more hunger or we are still challenged with in some parts of the world we still have that but then, we have also moved to a consumeristic society. So there again we have to bring back or we have to engrave these values of reuse, recycle and use minimum as much as possible. Again, we have lots of responsibility. I feel very fortunate and we are very privileged to have such an esteemed line up of woman leaders in this session, who will bring a wealth of experience to the table.

### **Co Moderator**

***Mr Shreyas Joshi, Young Professional, TERI***

As it is evident, I am the only male in this panel of immensely accomplished speakers, each of who is a stalwart in their respective fields. However, I assure you that my position here is that of a responsible and involved stakeholder. This is an exciting opportunity for me, as a young professional, to listen, learn, understand and more importantly develop my sensibilities towards experiences of women. My hopes for the session, is for this and the future generations to learn and be more inclusive, and for the older generations to work towards creating a more accommodating environment. Moving ahead, one of our biggest fallacies in gender and climate discourse has been that either elevating people to the status of heroes or relegating them to that of being mere victims. This dichotomy perhaps often leads to the blurring of nuances and that uniqueness of gendered experiences that exists even within the female identity.

Recognising the independent agency and leadership of women is very important, especially to mainstream gender and climate action discourse. Thus, through this session, with the presence of such wonderful speakers, I would like to have a fruitful discussion on women leadership in the global south, leveraging positions of power to bring forth voices from the ground, and how inclusive policies can be made with the help of women leaders, so that we can have more informed voices from the ground.

### **Leadership Address**

***Prof Laurence Tubiana, Chief Executive Officer, European Climate Foundation***

Thank you for this very interesting and provocative invitation because many people are talking about women leadership and women inclusion and at the same time, we know that we are lagging behind in so many fields, in so many countries, in so many processes. So, it is good to recall that we are not there, even if a lot have been proven that there was a lot to be learned from women leadership, and as Dr Vibha said the COVID crisis shows that women leaders have performed much better during the pandemic, just thinking about New Zealand, Finland and Taiwan. So, the proof is in the pudding in a way, and it has been demonstrated. Nevertheless, we are lagging behind in many fronts. Non-coincidentally, several of the same countries have also demonstrated considerable leadership in the climate field in recent years. A good example again is New Zealand which has placed sustainable development at the centre, including on the trade and diplomatic activity, so again demonstration is there.

And we have seen more on the rebellious front, the young women like Vanessa Nakate, Greta Thunberg, leading climate mobilization and calling the government, and asking them to be really accountable in front of their new generation. So, from the street to parliament and assemblies, they are speaking out with a great determination that should inspire everybody. But unfortunately, this actual leadership is not reflected in the formal treaty process, just for example, only 33% of UNFCCC delegates are women. And it is much worse, when you look at the heads of delegation, not speaking about ministers.

Every day women's leadership show exactly what the Paris Agreement's vision to include non-state actors was important. More representation of different actors but also more representative of women and that is what makes the Agreement more resilient, better equipped to tackle all the dimension of the climate crisis. Do not forget that

politics can have very detrimental effect on the climate action, and if we do not have a solid base of solid constituencies, with women being very active, we can have really a backlash on many fronts.

Today women are also better represented in youth movements and local communities who are carrying the norms of the Paris Agreement into their countries and community; from Operation Libero to Sunrise Movement to Fridays for Future, which all are led by women but we must continue and this mobilization where being inclusive, trying to fight for justice, are all values that normally everybody should share. We must continue to promote ecofeminism; sometimes people see that it is not a good combination of the two, but it is not the particular perception that the women would have, but the capacity to mobilize and the capacity to fight, and the central way of understanding climate change and climate action. This means a better understanding of women's perspective in climate action, a better understanding as well of how physical impact of climate, disproportionately affect women.

The impact of climate change reinforces existing social inequality, which means women are more affected, and are more vulnerable to conflict. Climate change is leading and will lead to a shortage of arable land and the drop in workers' incomes. The physical impacts of climate and floods, storms, deforestation, accelerated urbanization, crop failures, lower yields and higher food price everything is affecting more women. So according to the UN, this situation explains why the risk of death in a natural disaster is 14 times higher for women than men. I think this number is incredible. 75% of the environmental refugees today are women who become susceptible to violence and other form of exploitation.

Too often they lack the resources and knowledge to deal with that. This of course extends to and interacts with other forms of inequality such as race, class, health, and disability, and it also applies to western countries, not only to the more vulnerable countries. One example, pregnant woman is partially sensitive to problems caused by air pollution with cross-impact for demographic groups residing in urban centres. So, the way to break these structural patterns is by working to create new ones, ones where women are structurally represented in the decision-making process at all levels. A study realized on 130 countries suggests that those with a higher number of women in parliament are more likely to ratify environmental treaties, and I know the study ran across 90 countries all over the world, suggests that those with a higher number of women in Parliament tended to protect land areas at higher rates. So, the solution is here but of course, the system is resisting the change, but I think it is very good to join forces to make this happen.

Thank you.

### **Leadership Address**

#### ***Ms Rachel Kyte, Dean, Fletcher School, Tufts University***

It is always very difficult to follow Laurence but I think that we stand on each other's shoulders and that is one characteristic of the women's leadership that the world needs at the moment. So, I am going to try to weave together a number of different threads which I think are important, both looking back and looking forward. This year, we are going to celebrate 50 years of the Stockholm Environment Conference, really the first time that the international community came together and looked at the environment as an issue for international cooperation and in a true multilateral sense. I was recently speaking to the biographer of Shirley Temple Black, who many people just thought of as a child television film star, but who went on to have an illustrious diplomatic career and in her diaries and her memoirs, she records what it was like to be a woman involved in the run-up to in the Stockholm conference, at a time when there were so few women there, although the leadership statement was authored by Margaret Mead and Barbara Ward. So, as a woman she was invited to go off to a side room and have lunch with the wives, perhaps do some sightseeing, things like this. I have reflected on this, because I started my career in 1992 and my international environment career as it were, when Bella Savitzky Abzug and a group of women including Wangarĩ Muta Maathai and others from around the world, Ellen Enger from Norway and so many others, basically barnstormed their way into the negotiations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the Rio conference, and had to jam their foot in the door of the text negotiations and at one point, add the phrase, "and women and children" to every sentence, every paragraph just to get to the point where we could actually negotiate, what sustainable development meant from a gender perspective and what the implications of sustainable development, positive and negative, would be for women.

From that moment on, I think we have seen extraordinary activism by women across the globe pushing back at the boundaries of how we understand sustainable development and how it lands differently for women and for men and for children within communities and here we stand now on the 50th anniversary and we have come a long way but we still have as Laurence said a very long way still to go. I would say that some women have burst through the glass ceiling but many women now stand perched on the glass cliff. What I mean by a glass cliff, I think that there is some interesting scholarship now that when a task seems too difficult or too complex, where the possibility of success seems

quite remote, then institutions, financial institutions, private sector firms, government bureaucracies, cabinets, politicians, political movements will often put a woman in charge. At the same time, it is fearless women that strike every Friday and so much more that have really looked unblinkingly into the future and said we have to be the change we want to see.

I think there are also two other strands of scholarship which are important here. One is the research over very long periods of time, as to what diversity does to our perspective around risk. So, there has been research in management teams, leadership teams and the implications for private sector institutions firms for banks, including as a result of the great financial crisis more than 12 years ago, that when we have a more diverse team – diversity in this case being gender diversity – that the diversity of perspectives means, that we take a more holistic view of risk and we will make different risk decisions, we will have a different risk appetite within our team. Why is this important well, I think this is very important when we look at a wicked problem such as climate change or such as biodiversity loss or such as the waste and pollution a crisis that we face, and the fact that we need all of the diversity that we can get in our understanding of risk because we need to at one hand understand how this will impact different members within society differently, but also because we need that synthetic view of risk in order to be able to calibrate our response correctly. There is a tone deafness to much of our politics and too much of our leadership we know that we have not made progress in their gender balance, within boardrooms or within c-suites of global companies certainly within the financial sector. We have not made progress enough in elected representative chambers, in parliaments around the world, and so if we do not yet have that synthesized view of risk then how are we going to make the right choices and how to move forward. And the third piece of scholarship has been around resilience and what makes one community more resilient than another. Some of the interesting research has come out of Australia, in east Asia: Japan often in response to extreme weather events, has really focused on the social bonds that exist within a community, and how a community with stronger social bonds has more resilience and will actually do better in the teeth of a disaster and then afterwards.

We have come a long way. We stand on the shoulders of so many women who have forged a pathway for us, and now it is our responsibility to provide strong and broad soldiers for young women who are on the streets, the young women who are studying at schools like mine and around the world and open the door for them and which means that as there is a special responsibility.

I think for our generation of women and there is a special responsibility for men to lift women up and lift young men up with an expectation that only working together will we find the reciprocal vulnerability in the leadership we need. Reciprocal vulnerability is the idea that we can as leaders indicate that we do not have all of the ideas but that we will find them together in teams or in cross-sectoral dialogue or between countries and in that reciprocal vulnerability and allowing yourself as a leader to say, I do not have all the answers but I am going to find them together with you that you open up avenues for more social trust.

I think the one thing that we have learned from COVID and the one thing that we are learning from the climate crisis is that we need to build back social trust because communities with more social trust, do better through these crises and I think that women's leadership will be fundamental to that.

Thank you very much.

### **Leadership Address**

#### ***Ms Helen Clarkson, Chief Executive Officer, Climate Group***

Thanks, I would like to add my thanks to TERI for inviting me in the World Sustainable Development Summit and what a great pleasure is to be here amongst this fantastic group of people and if you are building a really impressive climate conference line-up with the top speakers of the world regardless of gender, I think all these women would be on the list. So, I just want to say it is not the list of the top women in climate but the top people here and I want to thank all of them for the work that they do and everything that their work inspires but we are here to talk about diversity and so I think the first question for me when looking at this is why diversity should be a goal in the climate space.

I know everyone here today listening to this would agree that it is morally the right thing to do but I think it is also the thing that is necessary to create the change that we need at the pace that we need it. When you think about diversity problems, I always kind of think about Silicon Valley and being called out on that. There is this monoculture of move fast and break things that we know attracts a particular type of white male, and they are sometimes excused by tech companies on the ground that start-ups need to solve urgent problems and it is time consuming to learn to work with colleagues from different backgrounds, so we are just going to go like this and I think you could possibly

argue the same thing in the climate space. We know that we are running out of time, we have got to halve emissions in this decade to get on a path to net zero by 2050, so surely, it is just why waste time on this other stuff.

But as we have seen with Silicon Valley, complex problems need multi-faceted solutions and hiring a monoculture means that when you are confronted with the problem; similar people reach for similar solutions. And there is a great thought experiment that I think explains this really well it is called the ketchup question and I think it really kind of gets into why diversity matters. So, if you are in the United States, you probably keep your ketchup in the fridge but in the UK and I understand also in India, we tend to keep our ketchup in the cupboard, so one day you go along to eat your fries, you reach into the cupboard or fridge and you have run out of ketchup. What do you get? What do you lay your hands on? In the U.S. the nearest thing to where your ketchup was is going to be the Mayonnaise but if you are in the UK then it is brown sauce and in India, pudina chutney so if you only hire people who keep their ketchup in the fridge the answer to your problem is always mayo and it is similar if you if you hire just the cupboard people but if we hire one of each, we have now got three solutions to the same problem mayo, brown sauce, pudina chutney.

We are trying to address a much bigger problem here than how to make our fries tasty, we are tackling the biggest issues of our time but people with the same experience and backgrounds are often going to reach for the same conclusions essentially, they are all reaching for the Mayonnaise. If we are going to respond to the sector, to these huge challenges ahead of us, then diversity is not just a box ticking exercise but an essential measure to improve our sector's ability to see problems and see solutions from as many perspectives as possible. I personally first made the connection between women's health and the climate and climate change when I was working in the Democratic Republic of Congo for med society, we were working with women who had been victims of sexual violence during the war and this was a few years later. That is when we managed to get in there and get a clinic open and so people were presenting quite late, compared to when these things had happened to them so they had some ongoing mental and physical health problems but their big problems were actually economic because this had put them into a situation where it was making it hard for them to earn a living and that was then made worse during a bad rainy season when farming was even more affected.

So, you could just see right in front of you, economic problems driving health issues and this kind of classic sustainability connection. The triangle: healthy environment, the economy and we know that weather is only going to make that more uncertain as the climate change and that spiral is going to get worse not better. That is well documented, it is what people are talking about. I think when they say the climate crisis is worse for women, but we also have a fundamental role in solving it and as I talked about before, the world needs every type of solution we can bring along. So, one of the questions I was asked about for the speech is what kind of platform is needed or needs to be created to address the four types of barriers to leadership and empowerment for women? So structural barriers, institutional mindsets, individual mindsets and life choices.

Structurally there is one big answer which is education. It has been mentioned I think already and it is going to no doubt be brought up again but educating girls, is according to research, carried out by project drawdown, one of the five most powerful levers available for avoiding emissions. Women with more years of education have fewer and healthier children and they actively manage their reproductive health. Educated girls realize higher wages and greater upward mobility contributing to economic growth and their agricultural plots are more productive and their families better nourished. Education also shores up resilience and equips girls and women to face the impacts of climate change and can be more effective stewards of food, soil, trees, water even as nature's cycles change and get great capacity to cope with shocks from natural disasters and extreme weather events.

Today there are economic, cultural, and safety related barriers that impede 62 million girls from around the world from accessing education. That is a tragedy on such a huge scale and we also need to see changes in not just the uptake of higher education but what women are studying and specializing in, when and if they get to university; we need to get women people of colour, working class people studying science technology engineering and maths. Without the knowledge and skills, they are not going to be equipped to deal with the problems we face. There is a breadth of issues right across the education space and we know that is a matter of urgency.

When it comes to the next institutional mindset, we know change is really hard, so changing company policies is a huge part of what we do at Climate Group. We are known for a lot for our business initiatives so RVI00, EVI00, EPI00, and as we are getting companies to join those, we really never make the case based on morals, we do not really talk that much about the climate crisis, we often go straight in and focus on the business case. We talk about the money, I would say that green solutions work better, we talk about PR benefits, the risk of not doing it including not being able to attract talent, we talk about leadership, and I think this is the same approach we need to take on diversity. Some UK research last year, the financial reporting council showed that higher levels of gender diversity in

the 3350 boards positively correlate with better future financial performance and 3350 boards with well-managed gender diversity contribute to higher stock returns and are less likely to experience stakeholder shareholder descent. So, if we want to see action at the speed, we require institutions that do not really see the need for change on diversity or on the climate as we are discussing here, we need to always come back to that business case.

Finally, we come to individual action and life choices and we are very hesitant to talk about these at the Climate Group because we think they are often a way of distracting from the big systemic changes that are needed. We do need individual action both in climate crisis and regards to diversity but while the systems are stacked against us, individual actions are not going to get us there on their own. So do that work because you want to, but bring your energy and your power to dismantling the organizational and structural issues that we face. Women make up half our population and yet we waste so much the potential but that is true also of people from different classes, different races, different castes. We need diversity in every form to address this crisis. So, looking at those speaking today I am optimistic that we are going in the right direction but it is clear that we have got a lot more to do Thank you.

### **Leadership Address**

***Ms Kate Hampton, Chief Executive Officer, Children's Investment Fund Foundation***

Thanks very much and it has been really interesting listening to the conversation so far.

Children's Investment Fund Foundation works on both climate and gender, and as the world's largest children's foundation, we obviously take the perspective of children and young people when addressing these problems and I think many people on the platform have already talked about what is leadership and both in terms of old power and new power, there are plenty of women's leadership already. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that where there are women in leadership positions, outcomes are better and we have also heard about the importance of diversity in innovation and solution creation. If we are trying to create a net zero world which has never been created before we are going to need a lot of innovation but not just tech innovation, social innovation, business innovation, political innovation, governance innovation, and so on. We have also heard about youth, and the power of youth and the power of young women. CIFF has been working with young people around the world on both sexual reproductive health and rights, girls' education, climate change and clean air, and there is no question that young people bring their lived experience to their leadership and new solutions to the fore, whenever they are given share of voice. Even when they are not given share of voice, they innovate in their own communities. It is really important to remember that nothing should be done for young people without young people in the room. Young people are not instruments of intervention, young people are leaders, they are agents of change and they have lived experience that should be taken into account.

In terms of the impact, we have also heard quite a lot about the impact of COVID on women and children. Like all shocks, it is women and children that are adversely affected, across our programmes. We have seen increased incidence in women being excluded from school, women are often the first to lose their jobs and we have seen an increase in gender-based violence, child marriage, trafficking; all of these things disproportionately affecting women and girls. Similarly, climate change, increase in extreme weather events, the burden of water collection that falls upon women in many low-income communities becomes harder and takes them away from other things, and increases their vulnerability to gender-based violence. All of these things are interconnected, we hear the phrase intersectionality a lot and yet much of the world continues to design solutions in silos and this is because we do not put the women and girls at the heart of decision making and see the world from their perspective. This is crazy even from a pragmatic perspective as Helen and others were saying. Investment in women and girls and investment by women and girls is actually going to accelerate our recovery and our resilience. We have heard the examples of the amazing force multiplier that is girls' education.

CIFF has been investing in keeping girls in school, keeping them out of marriage, enabling their transition to work, providing them with the life skills and control of their own fertility, this breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty in a way that nothing else does. As we have heard educated mothers are able to better provide for their children. So, it is an issue of rights but it is also an issue of pragmatism and it is an issue of economic prosperity. An investment by women and girls and this comes to one of the final points I wanted to make because so much has already been said that does not need repeating but we often do not value the right things. Our current economic model is very extractive. Externalities such as unpaid women's labour the social capital that Rachel was describing that is so crucial for resilience. Externalities are also environmental destruction of the nature that we all want to protect. The fact that these things are externalities in the current economic system show us that we are not valuing the right things.

We need to invest in asset classes that women and girls can lead and direct. We need to invest in restoration activities, community activities, improving air in cities these are all the kinds of investments that communities are already engaged in and they need much more attention, as asset classes that will help with recovery and resilience. So, what is

recognized as value as we have heard is different when women are in the room, what is recognized as risk we have already heard is different when women are in the room and the assessment of value and of risk is going to be crucial in solving climate change? So I am very much looking forward to the other panellists rather than repeating stuff that was already said but we have so many examples that Children's Investment Fund Foundation of projects where climate and gender are intersecting in new ways and where putting women and girls at the centre of design, of policies, of programs, of investment leads to multiplier effects that are not usually seen in these very narrow techno-economic vertical interventions that have been the history of philanthropy and ODA.

### **Leadership Address**

***Ms Mercy Wanja Karunditu, Deputy Executive Director, The Green Belt Movement***

Thank you and good evening.

As the head of program, I am honoured to be sharing the green belt movement, Integrated Landscape Approach to empowering communities, restoring degraded landscapes and improving livelihoods using tree planting as entry point. Our Green Belt Movement grassroots experience a nature-based solution to large degradation and community-based resilience building. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. The experience in Africa and in Kenya specifically indicates that women, youth and children especially are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This is because they are in charge of most of the domestic and livelihood activities. There is therefore need here for the greenbelt movement, and globally for innovative strategies and practices to alleviate poverty and ensure survival in the face of climate change. So here the Green Belt Movement we work with grassroots women. Our focus is to empower women and we do this by roping and networking with key stakeholders so that we are able to promote these strategies and practices and to address our climate change challenges.

Our focus is a flagship project for the Green Belt Movement, we do a lot of advocacy support for natural resources protection and conservation and also hold leaders accountable. We advocate for community and women engagement especially in decision making. We promote gender mainstreaming to ensure their participation and also inclusion. We also lobby and network with the private sector, we have a lot of resources to support nature-based enterprises that can empower the women that we work with economically. We organize multi-stakeholder's forum with diverse stakeholders who are able to interpret, to interrogate issues and opportunities. We also have a community-based measurement reporting and a verification system that enables carbon emission measurement at a household level. These are ways that empowers women to be able to contribute and know how they are contributing to reducing and increasing emissions.

What are the challenges that we are facing at the grassroots? Most of them are around lack of finances and to scale up a local solution that can help the women that we work with; lack of training and capacity building on climate change issues. We all know that climate change issues are highly technical, they need to be unpacked. Most of the documents that we have for adaptation, for the action plans, they are highly technical and they need to be unpacked and we make our user manuals for the women that we work with. Also, access to information. They need to understand what is happening, so information sharing is critical. We also have local societies where men call the shots and we empower the women to have leadership skills for them to be able to fit in this asset. Cultural barriers in Africa are very prevalent and we need to keep empowering the women so that they can be able to break through these barriers.

In terms of creating platforms to address the barriers that we have that women leadership face – one of the core areas that we work with here in the Green Belt Movement is an empowerment platform, we have a community empowerment and an environmental educational platform to equip the women with skills so that they can make linkages between environment and behavioural improvement and this is all done through tree planting. The Green Belt Movement uses a bottom-up approach to environmental conservation to improve the livelihoods and also empowering the communities so that we start with where the actions are, where a lot of damages are happening at the grassroots, where the women are using the resources that are adjusted to them, especially the forest resources. So, empowerment starts at the grassroots. That is the approach we use here at the Green Belt Movement. Again, the multi-stakeholder's forum is to focus on their behavioural change and mindset and also to provide alternatives and for writing good options. Indigenous knowledge is a way to bring local solutions and to refine some of the knowledge that we previously had, and has since been forgotten and also issues around technological transformation to ensure that we bring technologies that will help communities and progress.

In terms of empowering, social capital and attracting along with retaining advanced women leadership around political and economic issues empowerment is key; and also, experiential running and exchange visits for the communities at the grassroots so that they learn from others the best practices. They see how others are addressing the challenges and also, we have a package of leadership training to keep equipping these women. In terms of regulation in Kenya, we

have a Forest Conservation and Management Act and that has a component of participation of the forest to manage, it has allowed women to co-manage the forest resources with the Kenyan forestry services. Also, the climate change action plan that is ending this year, they need to be revised. Each one of them has priority mitigation and adaptation actions and, they are very clear where different youth, different gender can engage with men, women, children, and youth to support in building our resilience at the grassroots that move the government here in the country, brings resources closer to the people, and brings development to the communities.

In terms of the norms and the paradigm shifts, what we are looking into is to break through the cultural laws and the social norms so that we can have a complete gender mainstreaming in the resources management that we promote here, in The Green Belt Movement to ensure that the communities are able to conserve and protect the forest resources that they depend on and we all believe here that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace, good governance and environmental resources management

Thank you.

### **Leadership Address**

#### ***Ms Xiye Bastida, Co-founder, Re-Earth Initiative***

Hello everyone, it is a pleasure to be here and a pleasure to have listened to such insightful presentations. As somebody who is in university right now, I see that there is a future following this path of climate activism but in the future hopefully, I will be more involved in policy and climate policy, so I just feel so inspired by all the women who are here to see that this path is possible.

My name is Xiye Bastida, I am 19 years old and I am a climate justice activist. I am one of the organizers for Fridays for Future in New York city and the co-founder of the Re-earth Initiative and I think a lot of things have been said and one of the things that I think is very important that we have not really talked about directly is that much of the reason why women are not included in decision making, locally and internationally, is because of our very foundation of international relations, which is based on a framework of realism. That is a framework that basically says we countries are nations that will go to war with each other for money and power. It is a framework that does not centre women's leadership, women's perspectives which are much more sensitive and much more in touch with actual repercussions of countries' actions. When I learned about all of these frameworks of international relations in university, I suddenly understood why the world works the way it does and it is because eco-feminism has been pushed out of the conversation for centuries. It is not something that just came out of nowhere.

I was born in Mexico as part of the Otomi-Toltec indigenous community, my dad is Otomi, my mom is Chilean and I did not move to the U.S until I was 13 years old, so I grew up with this lens of indigenous philosophy where I learned five core principles that I think should be applied to our climate activism and to the way that we interact with each other. The first one is Intergenerational Cooperation which is very obvious to me as a youth activist. There is this African proverb that says "the youth run the fastest, but the elders know the path." So that basically says we are here as youth to push on everything; to push on legislation, to push on suing companies, on suing governments, we are here to change the curriculum in – schools my school this is the first time they offer LatinX climate justice as a class or they offer environmental ethics – and these are very new courses because students have pushed for these and this does not stop at the educational level at the household level, but it goes all the way to climate conferences and us being at COP26, at COP27 and beyond, so inter-generational cooperation is definitely something that is very prominent in indigenous communities, where we have youth and elder circles, where we learn directly from the elders in the community and their wisdom and our story as a community.

The next principle is the seventh-generation principle which basically says any decision that we make, we have to look back at the wisdom of seven generations to ensure the stability of the future seven generations. In our current society we think in quarterly reports, we think of the next semester in school, we think of very short term and if we do not start including the seventh-generation principle in our policy, we are talking about net zero by 2050, when in reality net zero means offsets which in large part are false solutions. We need much more drastic action, much more attuned action holistic action.

The next principle is to really act locally and think globally, and with women this is so important because the youth movement is entirely led by young women around the world. I can go anywhere in the world and find youth activists, youth strikers who will take me in as a friend and that has happened time and time again and the reason why I think this is also very important is because once we start becoming global citizens, once we start going to conferences every year, we lose touch of our community we lose touch of what is important, we lose touch of the reality that we have

to come back and empower our community, to push out that toxic waste, to push out that company that is contaminating our aquifer, and that is true to me for my town in Mexico.

The next principle is reciprocity that has been mentioned before. Earth gives us everything we need to survive and we need to have reciprocal principles to give back. We are taking and taking and that is all that we have been taught to do and I know that when I first learned about that, I realized that there was a dissonance, there was a disconnect between how we should behave and how we are behaving.

The last one is cyclicity. We are in a model based on infinite growth, and indigenous cultures work a lot with cycles; such as that of harvest. There is still progress but that progress is cyclical and when we put our mindset to that, it is a lot easier to understand where we should go, and how we should be returning to a lot of the things that we already know. We think that solutions are in the future and it is all about innovation but without wisdom those solutions will be empty solutions.

So that is all I wanted to share today. I just feel much empowered to have heard of so many amazing voices. My parents actually met at Rio also. So, they met at climate conferences and then I happened about 10 years later and I think that diversity of we have been talking about, it is also important to have diversity of backgrounds. We are the most connected generation and the climate movement is the most connected movement that has ever happened because of globalization, because of technology. It is important to consciously bring in voices that you have never heard before, voices that are not just on western political thought. For example, so that we can challenge ourselves to have a better imagination of the future.

Thank you.