

## A FITTING GIFT FOR MOTHERS



Women farmers are vulnerable to the effects of climate change on their crops and livelihoods. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT

Do you know the real story behind Mother's Day? The holiday began in the 1800s when women claimed their power as mothers and wives and called upon the nation's leaders to address a major moral issue of their day.

Climate change is one of the major moral issues of our day. So Church World Service invites you to honor those special women who have nurtured you

as well as all mothers around the world by contacting your U.S. Representative and Senators and urging them to support strong climate change legislation.

While climate change affects everyone, it does not affect everyone equally. The poorest people in wealthy and developing nations suffer the worst effects of the build-up of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. About 70% of the world's poor are women and children.

The Nobel-prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offers a sobering scientific account of the social, economic and environmental pressures communities already face – particularly in developing countries. One thing too few people realize is how these pressures present special challenges for women and girls.

In sub-Saharan Africa droughts are becoming more severe. As a consequence, girls spend more time looking for water and less time in school. Women farmers who rely on rain for

growing subsistence crops are finding it even more difficult to feed their families.

Climate change is aggravating the number and severity of natural disasters. Research shows that women and children are far more likely to die in these disasters than men. The 2004 Asian tsunami so poignantly illustrated this – where male survivors in Sri Lanka and Indonesia outnumbered female by 3 or 4 to 1. One reason – females aren't taught how to swim or climb trees so they couldn't save themselves. In the U.S., low-income elderly women are a high risk group for fatalities during heat waves – which are expected to increase in coming years.

The gender implications of climate change are numerous. The bottom line is that the poorest 1 billion persons on the planet – so many of whom are women and children – did not create climate change. They should not be expected to shoulder the greatest burden adjusting to it.

**The House is considering a climate bill now and the Senate will soon start. We have a moral obligation to ensure that this legislation contains adequate adaptation assistance to help communities adjust and that women and girls' needs and voices are central to community responses.**

**Call or write your elected officials today!**

To contact your elected officials go to:

<https://secure2.convio.net/cws/site/Advocacy?pagename=homepage&id=185>

Let President Obama know you want the U.S. to be a part of a meaningful international climate change agreement that includes adaptation funding. Sign the Countdown to Copenhagen Campaign post card at [www.Countdown2Copenhagen.org](http://www.Countdown2Copenhagen.org).

Learn more about women and climate change:

See the Church World Service publication, "Women and Climate Change," at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org) or order from Church World Service 1-800-297-1516. Ask for item # EA0934.