



RISE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE, EVERY DAY!¹

Pacific women fight to defend
the commons

Audrey Roncevich

On December 11-12, over 70 women will participate in the first Fiji Convention of Women Defending the Commons in Suva. The collective's dual vision for climate and social justice rests on the recognition of climate change as an inherently feminist issue: produced and perpetuated by racism, heteropatriarchy, and neo-colonialism.

SDG 13 demands urgent action against climate change and its impacts. Although climate change affects all people, women and LGBTQI+ people are most hurt by resource losses. Women Defending the Commons (WDC) has emerged as a political and social network for marginalized women in Fiji. The collective represents grassroots activists and environmental groups. Before their first convention WDC presented five demands.

1. Get off all fossil fuel. Time is short. This includes you #Australia

WDC testifies to the destruction and depletion of natural resources through neoliberal capitalism, which reinforces global inequities. Evoking the 2015 Paris Agreement and Western states' lip service to personal accountability, the collective points out that vulner-

able populations bear the brunt of climate change disaster, yet corporate elitists continue to profit.

2. Ensure an urgent and just transition to renewable energy democracy

Destroying the earth is big business, with no inconsequential yield. WDC denounces those who benefit from "commodifying" the earth, such as mining-multibillionaire Gina Rinehart. A democratic transition necessitates equitable redirection of resources towards renewable energy initiatives.

3. Protect environmental & climate defenders. Protect Women Human Rights Defenders, and LGBTQI+ Human Rights Defenders too

Given Australia's topmost per-capita emissions rate, its decision to welcome Adani's contentious Carmichael coal mine shocked many in the smaller Pacific islands. Not incidentally, these islands, which are disproportionately affected by climate change, are also home to many indigenous peoples: marginalized groups who are often left out of the conversation.

4. Eliminate all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination

Women and LGBTQI+ people are es-

pecially vulnerable, due to compounding factors of patriarchy and neoliberalism. WDC acknowledges this oppression but also empowers women as agents of change.

5. Build gender just, equitable societies, economies and end poverty

Charging governments as the protectors of human rights, WDC calls for not only addressing present crises, but also building a more sustainable future. One cannot discredit the undeniable evidence for each of these demands. Yet decades of dismissing these concerns prove exactly why they need to be heard. ■

Reference: ¹ The text is a summary of the article "Rise for Climate Justice, Every Day!" written by Noelene Nabulivou from DIVA (Diverse Voices and Action) for Equality based in Suva, Fiji, <https://diva4equality.wordpress.com/2018/09/16/demands-of-pacific-women-rise-for-climate-justice-every-day/>. Follow WDC: Twitter: @diva4equality, Web: <https://diva4equality.wordpress.com>, #WomenDefendCommons #FijiFeminist2018 #PPGCCSD #PacificFeministSRHR

About the author: Audrey Roncevich is an outspoken feminist studying language and Human & Organizational Development at Vanderbilt University. She is currently an intern at Frauen*solidarität.