Further, as governments and donor agencies

increasingly target women as critical agents

for community adaptation to climate change;

in their role as smallholders as the mainstay

of sustainable food production; and through

limiting their reproductive rights as the answer

to population-environment problems; there is a

danger of entrenching gender stereotypes and

inequalities.

Policy responses that view women as

“sustainability saviours” draw upon and

reinforce stereotypes regarding women’s

roles in relation to the family, the community

and the environment. Such responses often

add to women’s already heavy unpaid work

burdens without conferring rights, resources and

benefits. Power imbalances in gender relations

determine whether women’s actions and work

translate into the realization of their rights and

capabilities. While the participation of women

is vital, their involvement in policy interventions

aimed at sustainability does not automatically

mean greater gender equality, particularly when

the structural foundations of gender inequality

remain unchanged.