

Opening statement by Women's Major Group  
19 April 2004

It is with great respect for the hundreds of millions of our sisters - living in all corners of this one planet Earth –, that want our voices be heard at this CSD.

Our sisters:

- who walk the long distances over rough terrain to collect water, fuel and fodder – day after day;
- who carry heavy loads on their heads and shoulders;
- who do all the work in the households: washing, cooking, cleaning, purchasing;
- who produce food on the land, collect products from the forest, catch fish from the waters;
- who sell their goods in villages and towns, and earn the incomes that sustain their families;
- who share their knowledge and wisdom with their daughters and sons, generation after generation;
- who care for the healthy and the sick, the young and the old;
- who sustain disasters and face conflicts, and rebuild their communities.

Our sisters that are being abused and raped, when they are searching for water, or for a safe place to defecate.

Their daughters that can not attend schools at times that they menstruate, as safe toilets are failing.

Our sisters that bear the heavy burden of the HIV/AIDS pandemic more than anybody else – carrying loads of water to the sick often at the expense of income generating activities.

It is their live-giving resources that become destroyed, polluted, impoverished, privatized, unaffordable, un-accessible. Their voices that are not heard yet, their perspectives that are not guiding our water and sanitation agenda yet, their decision-making seats that are not open to them yet.

We are women from all corners of the world, we are indigenous women, rural women, women living in urban slums, in conflict areas, and on land that has been flooded or dried up.

Yes, we want the JPOI to be implemented, the MDGs to be reached, and above all a peaceful and healthy planet for all.

Let's make this CSD and its follow-up a manifestation of our Common Caring Capacity!!