

Speaking points women's major group on water & sanitation review, 13 May 2008
(morning session)

Strong language in the CSD13 recommendations about involvement of women and youth as actors and taking gender issues into account, but this is still too often not the case. The means of implementation are critical to turning commitments into actions. To name a few:

- Criteria of funders often include the proof of long standing legal status and proven track-records; most women's organizations can not comply with that either because they have recently been founded or are not able to get a legal status because of lack of resources or legal constraints – a paradigm shift and creative solutions by policy makers is needed.
- Gender indicators and disaggregated data collection is still missing from monitoring programs and planning, thus not making the problem or other solutions visible. We suggest, the Commission requests Member States, with a view to strengthening financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, to integrate gender perspectives in the preparations for and outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Qatar in 2008 as also recommended by the Commission on the status of women 2008.
- Women are still treated as a target group and offered a solution instead of taken seriously as actors who are enabled to make their own informed choices. Training and capacity building including vocational training to enable them to do the maintenance and daily management - often does not include women.
- The death toll in sub-Saharan Africa due to diarrhea, malaria and HIV/AIDS is the highest, particularly among children and women. The amount of water needed to care for a HIV/Aids patient at home – by lack of other possibilities – is 3 to 4 times higher, causing again women and girls to spend more time on fetching water. We call for measures to better water distribution, provision of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to be also included in health policies and – projects
- We urge policy makers to look at criteria for water services again; some present criteria seem to have a negative impact on awarding funding to NGOs'/ CSO's by:
 - o not making a distinction between water distribution in general and safe drinking water amounts
 - o by using their definition of affordability, not looking at notions in non-money communities and the need for low cost exploitation
 - o by working with cost indicators that are not realistic looking at the need for training and other type of facilities to be included; this makes gender sensitive alternative solutions for women and girls impossible.
- Bringing down the amount of water used is an important issue in the developed countries and in agriculture in general. Women are amazed that in this issue suddenly their role as

the household manager and farmer is not recognized when it comes to developing policies and strategies to bring down water consumption. We strongly recommend governments start to work more with women's organizations And facilitate them to do so

- Local water supply services in slumps and rural areas by local water vendors and small companies is often seen as a problem, instead of part of the solution. We urge donors to be open to new solutions and include other management systems and capacity building for local water and sanitation providers in their support schemes. Examples like the water vendors cooperation in Nigeria or the Nepal program schooling the poorest women and making their activities from close to slavery into an excreta removal business.
- We urge countries to ratify the UN water courses convention AND to recognize the right to basic water and sanitation services and safe tenure.
- Last but not least, we suggest that water & sanitation issues will be discussed during th G8 and to the Bureau and the Member States, that time is allotted during CSD 17 to formulate additional recommendations and policies for the newly emerged issues.