

**Input of women major group during Major group dialogue on Partnerships, CSD session 9th May 2008 – by Lesha Witmer, Women for Water Partnership**

A partnership is not a goal in itself. However to reach its goal, it has to be a real partnership first and clear on its goal. For that a start on an equal footing is essential. By communicating with respect for each other's role and knowledge, there will be real results. We observe that that is often not the case. Trust is also an important prerequisite.

Most partnerships attention seems to go to public – private partnerships. It sounds as if they see it as a marketing tool and are usually supply driven – instead of demand driven. So as a consequence there are very few real public private partnerships with the poor, and for those matter women.

More partnerships should be formed between national and local governments, CSO's and small local business to use the strength of each for sustainable development at the local and national level.

The biggest problem for partnerships to get off the ground, in most cases, is the lack of funding for institution - and capacity building, since most donors are project orientated in their criteria and not supporting processes. Real seed money is needed for that. Building a partnership takes time. To start a partnership, a lot of donors ask for "history" – that is a paradigm. On that note we like to acknowledge the work that the seed initiative is doing and their remarks this afternoon.

And to answer the government of Sweden's questions: investment in hardware is a disinvestment without capacity development and education of the users.

Donor-coordination is a choice of the governments involved. What does matter is the information the NGO's / CSO's receive on who to talk to and what issues to discuss. Usually that kind of information is not available.

We highly appreciate the financial support of countries like Norway. Do not forget that it is not only women from Africa and Asia who need your support; a lot of

women here are volunteers from other continents, who invest their time for free but have no financial means to travel and contribute to sessions like these either.

We support the call of the Youth to have Youth – and as far as we are concerned - women and NGO's on government delegations; it is an effective way to partner, have an effective dialogue on issues and give indirect financial support.

To conclude: We do believe in partnerships. Two successful partnerships are the GRANT foundation and the women for water partnership. They both encompass women from all walks of life who support each other on the basis of respect for each other's talents. This we believe is the basis of their success. We are happy to share our way of working when we are seen as actors and equal partners.