

Report of  
**GENDER IN COURT**  
3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum  
March 17, 2003, Kyoto, Japan

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The session was organized by the Gender and Water Alliance in collaboration with several other organizations working actively to promote gender within the water and sanitation sector. During this innovative session, a mock trial was used to analyze the impact of gender approaches in water and sanitation policies, institutions, and programmes. The discussions were organized around a set of four separate case studies presented by **Gender Advocates**. At the end of each presentation the **Questioners** cross-examined and the **Public** (audience) had the opportunity to pose their own questions and share experiences. A panel of **Judges** representing governments, private organizations, NGOs independent experts, and international organizations delivered the “verdict.”

**Masters of Ceremonies** were Ms. Lorena Aguilar, Senior Gender Advisor for the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Mr. John Soussan, Stockholm Environment Institute University of York.

The panel of Judges was facilitated by H. E. Ambassador Priscilla Jana, South Africa Ambassador to the Netherlands and included:

- Ms. Shireen Lateef, Principal Social Development Specialist (GAD) Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division, Asian Development Bank;
- Ms. Marcia M. Brewster, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Development Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
- Ms. Sarah Timpson, former manager of the UNDP project PROWWESS (Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Environmental Sanitation Services) and soon to be advisor to the UNDP; and
- Mr. Martin Walshe and Ms. Hilary Grimes, The Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom.

The **Questioners** were facilitated by Mr. Jon Lane, former WaterAid Director and included:

- Hon. Gamini Jayewickreme Perera, Minister of Irrigation and Water Management, Government of Sri Lanka;
- Mr. S. S. Meenakshisundaram, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development;
- Ms. Maria de Fatima Dias Coelho, representing Minister Marina Silva, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Brazil;
- Mr. Ken Caplan, Business Partners for Development;
- Ms. Barbara Earth, Assistant Professor, Gender and Development Studies, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand; and
- Ms. Ana Hardoy, Executive Director, International Institute for Environment and Development, Latin America.

The **Gender Advocates** were facilitated by Ms. Maliha H. Hussein, Chairwoman, Gender and Water Alliance and included:

CASE 1 – The Beneficiaries: Men and Women

- Ms. Mariela Garcia, Coordinator of Community Management and Institutional Development, CINARA, Colombia
- Ms. Nelly Guapacha, Community Leader, El Hormiguero, Colombia
- Ms. Seyda Sorn, CARE, Cambodia

CASE 2 – The Implementers at Local Level: CBOs and NGOs

- Ms. Rosa Alvarez, Director, Mujeres en Desarrollo Dominicana (MUDE), Dominican Republic
- Ms. Adele Williams, Director of Planning and Evaluation, MUDE, Dominican Republic
- Ms. Fatoumata Guindo, Helvetas, Mali
- Ms. Olivia Dabbous, Gender and Water Programme, Ps-Eau, France

CASE 3 – The Institutions

- Ms. Simi Kamal, Chief Executive, Raasta Development Consultants, South Asia Coordinator for Women and Water Networks, and Director, Pakistan Water Partnership
- Ms. Shazreh Hussain, Pakistan Women and Water Network
- Mr. Nasreer Gillani, Chief, Environment, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan and Director, Pakistan Water Partnership
- Ms. Hamida Masood, President, Women Welfare Association and Convenor, Nara Canal Area Water Partnership, Pakistan
- Mr. Keoudom Namsena, Chief, Management and Administration Division, The National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat Central), Ministry of Health, Laos PDR
- Ms. Keodokmay Phouipaseuth, Chief, Financial Unit, The National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat Central), Ministry of Health, Laos PDR
- Ms. Harumi Okawa, Deputy Director, Global Issues Division, Planning and Evaluation Department Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan

CASE 4 – The Policy

- Ms. Barbara Schreiner, Deputy Director General, Policy and Regulation, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Government of South Africa

H.E. Ambassador Jana gave the opening address, stating that women have a crucial role in water management and that multiple global agreements, including Bonn and WSSD, have called for their participation. She cited South Africa as a good example of achieving equity in water resources distribution and decision-making. In the post-apartheid years, new water policies have focused on providing free basic water access to the poorest of the poor, providing new forms of employment and women's participation. However, gender equity and mainstreaming remains a challenge and measurable changes have not been implemented on the ground. Jana recommended that we can move from vision to action by listening to what poor women and men can tell us about their water needs, and be guided the idea of 'some for all rather than all for some.'

Maliha H. Hussein introduced the cases throughout the day, opening with an overview of the levels at which cases will be presented. At the community level, the cases look at the impact of participation by women and men. At the NGO level, the cases look at participation from an

implementation perspective, trying to determine how to operationalize gender. At the institutional level, the context of a patriarchal society and bureaucracy is most intense. The policy level forms the overarching framework for the water sector, and integrating gender at this level can help to achieve Integrated Water Resources Management.

## **Case 1 – The Beneficiaries: Men and Women**

### **Community El Hormiguero, Colombia**

In El Hormiguero, a community-based group of men and women worked together on water supply problems. Men were involved in the building of pumping infrastructure, but when there was a need for continued maintenance of the system, men became less involved than women. Users of the system were falling behind payments and women had limited knowledge of technical issues. A water board was organized and successfully managed the system and improved payments, but as women began to dominate the group, men felt excluded.

#### Call for Action

Communities need institutional support in order to establish follow-up processes which allow the sustainability of changes in gender relationships.

#### Recommendations

Institutions should carefully analyze women's roles at the community level because in Latin America we are doing more than daily survival chores. We are defending the public interest and this has not been sufficiently recognized.

Communities need support to develop the young men and women as new leaders for the future. New leaders who will lead by example of democratic participation and gender awareness.

### **CARE Cambodia**

CARE Cambodia conducted a research study on the impact of floods on women and girls in Cambodia in order to assess coping strategies and perceptions about flooding, and provide appropriate assistance during flood emergencies. The study found that in many instances people are unable to distinguish between disaster and normal situations and only associate disaster with immediate food needs. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to floods because they often cannot swim, lack access to boats, and are forced into stay in their house alone while men are absent. After floods, women take on additional workload caring for family, and in some cases repayment of loans leads to selling the family's house and land.

#### Call for Action

The concerns and needs of women and girls must be a primary consideration in the design of any actions to manage or mitigate the impacts of water disasters such as floods, droughts, flash floods, desertification, etc.

#### Recommendations

1. Relief response to water disasters must be based on gender-sensitive damage and needs assessments.

2. Recovery response to water disasters must include access to pro-poor and woman focused credit schemes to relieve the psychological stress on women who have to rehabilitate their households and to resume their family livelihoods.

In response to the Colombia case, the **Questioners** were interested in the fact that water projects have the potential to sustain positive changes in gender relations. They asked whether gender was integrated in the follow-up to construction or already existed in the project; how indicators were used to change perception of society; and whether women have the skills to develop an equitable partnership with men. The **Gender Advocates** from Colombia responded that the women have involved the men in the work but they have lost interest and there is a need to maintain their involvement. Women take the leadership in collective community efforts, including health, adult education, children's programs. Women's empowerment is important, but equally critical is a reconstruction of masculinity and the role of men. Qualitative indicators might measure whether men respect women and recognize women's leadership role and importance of equity in working together.

The **Questioners** observed that the focus of the study in Cambodia was women's vulnerabilities, rather than women's strengths, and there is a need to shift focus to mobilizing these capacities for overcoming problems. In flood and disaster situations, coping at the household level is the first priority and there is no time for community organizing. One simple recommendation could be that men be present in the household in these periods, because they are often absent as migrant laborers or otherwise. Ms. Sorn indicated that women are poorly represented in village and political structures because traditional roles relegate them to bearing all household responsibilities. Improved participation of women is important, as is the provision of boats and life jackets during floods.

From the **Public**, Anthony Johnson from Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE) in Nigeria commented that for women to be effectively engaged, the participatory process must be fully inclusive, and asked whether women in these cases have the capacity to participate in a meaningful way. Marshall Silver from UNDP Disaster Management Program in Vietnam commented that in the last ten years in South East Asia, traditional coping mechanisms have become obsolete due to climate change and increased flooding. He asked how we can help women learn new coping mechanisms and skills which weren't needed before. A participant from Youth Action Team commented that in Latin America the first step is redefining gender roles among children in the household, and asked what is being done to bring in youth and men on this. A participant from PSI in Central America commented that technical training for women on water infrastructure repair was critical during Hurricane Mitch in Central America. A participant from South Africa commented that girls should have training in engineering, and asked what can be done to encourage non-traditional occupations for women.

The **Gender Advocates** from Colombia indicated that children are involved through sports and cultural programs, and there is a school program with girls on sustainability of water resources. The **Facilitator** commented that education on gender roles goes beyond Latin America to Africa and Asia.

The **Judges** commented that in the case of Colombia, men should be brought back into the program, and that Cambodia's case was interesting in terms of perceptions of women. In Cambodia's study, flooding increased workloads for women, and had negative consequences for

women's health, security and safety. The Judges recommended that disaster mitigation programs should build on women's strengths and include capacity-building for women. The research in Cambodia should be used to propel an action-oriented program.

## **Case 2 – The Implementers at Local Level: CBOs and NGOs**

### **Mujeres en Desarrollo Dominicana (MUDE), Dominican Republic**

In the community where MUDE works, men use water for bathing animals and economic activities and women use water for food preparation and hygiene. MUDE is using a gender approach by facilitating women's increased participation in a community water committee and developing a community diagnosis with basic sex-disaggregated data on water uses. This approach takes women's roles into account, optimizes economic and social development for women, reduces conflicts over water by agreeing on uses, supports equal participation in decision-making, and ensures the sustainability of the water system by involving both women and men. The remaining challenges have been qualitative indicators to measure women's roles, paying for water services, how to value volunteer time and conservation activities, and preventing monthly payments from only being women's responsibility.

#### Call for Action

To ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the operation and management of water and sanitation systems, projects need to involve the community and operate with a gender-sensitive perspective.

#### Recommendations

1. It is essential to raise awareness and build capacity on gender analysis for all people involved in the development and implementation of water and sanitation projects. These include senior government officials, consultants, technicians, NGOs and CBOs. Gender sensitization should be treated as a continual process of capacity development both for new people/staff as well as for existing personnel.
2. It is necessary to define qualitative indicators to measure women's empowerment and changes in roles and relations between men and women as a product of the process of participating in water and sanitation projects.

### **Helvetas, Mali**

This case reviewed a project sponsored by the Swiss government set out to improve small-scale water supply systems. The population did not use the system at first because the women and men of the community were not consulted. A new project was formulated in which participation and gender relations were integral and thus, the project was successful. Recommended actions include creation of a dialogue space between women and men; information exchange and consultation with focus groups, including youth and women; awareness-raising, training, and capacity building for the populations; and more responsibility for women at all levels of management. A particularly noteworthy effect of gender mainstreaming in this project was that when men understood that their family's health depended on water payments they were more likely to contribute.

### Call for Action

The conceptualization and budgeting stage of the project needs to allocate real resources for gender mainstreaming. Donors, governments and NGOs need to specifically include funds for hiring staff such as gender specialists and sociologists who take time to develop real participatory work with women and men.

### Recommendations

1. Women and men should be considered the first stakeholders of water resources and not only as beneficiaries of a project or programme.
2. Gender mainstreaming with gender-trained staff should begin with project conception and continue throughout the project cycle.
3. Regular and long-term follow-up is needed so that changes related to water and gender equity become sustainable

The **Questioners** observed that gender was built into the Dominican Republic case from the beginning, but in Mali this was a more difficult task because gender had to be integrated retrospectively after many years. Commenting that changing attitudes is a very long process, they asked whether the Gender Advocates saw any possibilities for shortcuts in the replication of these gender mainstreaming methods. They also raised the following questions: What are the implications for urban versus rural replication of this process? How it came about that only women were paying for water in Mali, how was this changed to make men also responsible, and is this change sustainable? When NGOs move out of a community will current activities be sustained, is there an exit strategy for NGOs and public sector institutions, and are we making society dependent on NGOs? Are there specific ways to sustain gender mainstreaming? What is the comparative advantage of women's participation? What are the costs of gender mainstreaming, because skeptics will challenge gender because of costs involved?

The **Gender Advocate** from Mali responded that in this rural and small-scale agricultural area, women are responsible for bringing water from the river or other source, and men did not understand the benefits of financial investment in infrastructure. In terms of shortcuts, rather than societal upheaval they are looking for a change in attitudes and assimilation of change. In rural areas it is sometimes seen as unprofitable to deliver water, so in order to make water affordable the population has to invest in the maintenance of its water infrastructure. Governments might set up the water infrastructure through development institutions and a community investment of 20%, but the maintenance of the system is often left to the community. The NGO reinvigoration process consisted of local organizations very quickly developing their own actions over nine months, but capacity building is needed to sustain community activities independent of outside NGOs.

The **Gender Advocates** from the Dominican Republic responded that gender mainstreaming is an ongoing process for which there is no shortcut. They commented that gender mainstreaming is not an approach reserved for specialists. Community participation, especially women's participation, helps ensure that one community relays information to other communities and these processes are replicated. Governments must bear in mind the important role of NGOs and increase sub-contracting to NGOs. Communities in rural areas are able to work with a more collective attitude, whereas urban communities are more individualized and it is difficult to instill a collective approach.

From the **Public**, a participant from the Institute for Sustainable Agriculture in Nepal commented that women's heavy workload precludes their participation in other activities, and asked what gender-sensitive technologies could help women in this way. A participant from the Asian Development Bank asked about the comparative advantage of participation, especially for poor people who do not have time to participate. Jasveen Jairath from India commented that beyond gender mainstreaming we need to think about IWRM in an integrated way. In Bangladesh, over-pumping of groundwater for agriculture has a direct impact on the water supply itself, and while system maintenance is dominated by men, women are left out and policy decisions do not support gender sensitive technology. A participant from India asked how to translate these requirements into legal and political rights for women. Gina Castillo, Oxfam-Netherlands, commented that while participation is important, we need to be careful when this becomes additional work for women.

The **Gender Advocate** from the Dominican Republic responded that changing men's attitudes and offering women a variety of ways to participate is critical. The poorest of the poor are not involved in micro-enterprises, but they do participate in water and health projects. Women do not have time to participate in meetings, especially when girls attend school, so women's domestic tasks have to be lightened to facilitate their participation.

The **Judges** commented that both cases showed the positive benefits of NGO involvement, including facilitating dialogue, involving women, ensuring community structures are in place, and serving as intermediary between community and government. However, NGOs should be seen as catalysts to enable local ownership and develop local capacity to manage systems. Experience has shown that NGOs can be more successful at service provision than government since intensive community work can be expensive, thus NGOs should be involved in a sustained manner. In terms of the costs of gender mainstreaming, infusing government and donor resources at the beginning project, instead of mid-way, will bring long-term and sustainable benefits. The more important question is the cost of failure, especially in light of Mali's unused infrastructure. The gender and participatory approach is more cost-effective in the long-term.

The **Judges** summarized the discussions around the first two cases from the morning session. The Court struggled with the role of NGOs and the ability of communities to maintain their own momentum. Inclusion of all social groups increases equity and improves the success of water resources projects. Women must be involved in decision-making related to disaster mitigation plans and water supply technology, and have access to technical training and capacity building. Projects should build on women's strengths, instead of only seeing women's vulnerabilities. When men are not involved, this creates divisions in communities and prevents the sustainability of gender relations. Men need to be involved, whether that means creating incentives for participation once technical work is done, providing separate dialogue spaces for men, or making sure men are present during disasters. Prioritizing water uses by women and men and using qualitative indicators to measure changes in attitudes toward gender are important tools for gender analysis. While there are costs associated with introducing a participatory and gender approach and there is a burden on women to participate, the costs of not mainstreaming gender are far greater.

### **Case 3 – The Institutions**

#### **The National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply, Ministry of Health, Laos.**

The case is based on a project on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement in North-West Region in Lao People's Democratic Republic, an area of minority communities. The main objectives of this Project were capacity building and institutional strengthening of Provincial and District levels of Nam Saat (National Centre for Environmental Health and Water Supply), to formulate a suitable water supply and sanitation improvement plan, and to improve gender balance, especially in how this relates to hygiene awareness and water and sanitation provision. The project was premised on providing choices in sanitation via participatory processes. Participatory processes included the use of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA).

The project cycle included a baseline study and analysis, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and the development of a plan for rural water supply and sanitation. The involvement of women and men from the initial stages of the project enabled the project to focus on people's needs and priorities. Evaluation of the project revealed that women gained operation and maintenance skills, both women and children did washing and bathing more frequently, and there was a reduction of diarrhea in children.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Implementing agencies of water supply and sanitation have to promote bottom up approach of community participation at all levels of the project.
2. All stakeholders should agree to a gender mainstreaming approach beforehand and gender awareness and training should be offered from the initial stage.
3. Increase the number of women staff at the management level of implementing agencies.

#### **Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP)**

Ms. Shazreh Hussain began the case by describing the impact of the first ever gender training session for government officials and the level of resistance to it. However, after the training, all participants wanted gender training for all levels of government.

Mr. Gallani, a senior government official in the Planning Commission is convinced of the importance of a gender approach and has become an advocate of gender mainstreaming. He described the extensive government involvement in the Pakistan Water Partnership - a multi-sectoral network of civil society, government and private sector including the Women and Water Network.

The case demonstrated the importance of linking gender training with strategic actions at the local, regional and national level. Gender training is also a significant component of organizing women at the grassroots to enable them to participate in all matters related to water – irrigation, drainage, drinking and domestic water.

Women and Water Network (WWN) are grassroots women's committees in various districts of Pakistan. They have successfully mobilized women in rural areas and lobby for 50% female membership in all levels of water and sanitation organizations. Fifty percent of Area Water

Partnership budgets are dedicated to gender mainstreaming to enable women to be involved, encourage more women in water groups, and encourage women in leadership. Ms. Hamida Masood is one of these leaders. She is now on the board of the PWP. The area that she lives and works in covers a population of 1 million people and 2 million acres of irrigated land. Area Water Partnerships work on agriculture and water and now have more women active at all levels. Women are now involved in farmer organizations and water user committees and decision-making.

#### Call for Action

Women should constitute 50% of all institutions, structures, committees, etc. in the water and sanitation sectors.

#### Recommendations

1. Gender-sensitive training for water and sanitation should take place at the highest levels in the relevant government Ministries and Departments.
2. Gender training should go hand in hand with strategic gender actions that are well defined and achievable.

The **Questioners** were pleased to hear about link between health and sanitation in Laos. In the case of Pakistan, they were very impressed by the fundamental changes in government at the local and national levels. A question directed to Laos wondered if the PRA showed the perception of women about their region and their expectation of the project? How did the results of the PRA impact on the Ministry of Health? Laos responded by indicating that this method was used as one of many to enhance participation in the project and specifically in terms of health.

Barbara Earth said that while it is good that women are included, what about ethnic sensitivity? What about the use of inappropriate language to refer to ethnic communities? Who is implementing these projects? Non-ethnics?

According to JICA, the Sector Strategy did address minority needs for water and sanitation. Lots of different languages and workshops were carried out with facilitators and use of pictures and images to communicate. "Marginal groups" were included in meetings.

Ms.Maliha Hussain elaborated that gender sensitivity often enables a greater sensitivity to other people and issues.

Mr. Meenakshisundaram, questioned if the work in Pakistan on gender inclusion was also focusing on poor rural women? What are you doing with the men in Pakistan, now that women are getting more involved?

Mr. Gullani replied that change management is not easy. There are now reservation quotas in place and there is a call for gender specialists in each ministry. This process has now begun. And yes, PRSP is being done with gender-sensitivity. Gullani also said, "We do not consider women different from us even though we are a family focused culture. We are losing the intellectual capacity of women by not having them involved in government. We need to tap into the human resources for the wealth of the country. We are doing a lot of gender training of government and most of these are men and very few women in these courses."

Simi elaborated that there are efforts underway in Pakistan to address the inequality of women. There is a Gender Reform Programme underway in the government and she is heading it.

Ms. Masood responded that in the last 10 years they have been working on awareness raising and building confidence in local women and with line agencies working in those areas. Rural women themselves have run European Union projects as well as projects by UNICEF. And women participated in many levels of the project. She said that she herself is a result of that process. Most projects that women are involved in are now self-sustaining. No more donor funding.

From the **Public**, Sultana Afroz, Bangladesh Women Water Network, said the Network has been effective for promoting gender involvement in water. She wanted to know how long it took to build the Pakistan partnership and convince the government to agree?

A woman from Brazil wanted to know if very poor people were involved and how? The response was partly, which is why government is changing due pressure from the ground. Pakistan is doing social gender analysis and not only gender analysis and so includes issues of poverty and landlessness. For example, in local government elections lots of women were elected due to the 33% quota set by government. Many of these are illiterate.

Another woman commented that was it not shameful that we are doing a “gender in court”, and that 50% of the women are still excluded and we have to beg for inclusion. The 6000 people at the 3<sup>rd</sup> WWF who are not at this workshop are the ones we need to convince.

Martin Rall from Mvula Trust, South Africa said that the experience of quotas has been very positive there. Women are 50 % of all water committees and there are quotas for the national parliament. Quotas help determine and enable quality very fast.

An example from rural Japan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was given to demonstrate that a situation of intense discrimination against young wives from their mothers-in-law with regards to water was altered by the use of extension workers to assist these women.

The **Judges** stated they were fascinated by this Session. In the morning there were cases on communities and this afternoon on changing large institutions. They were pleased to note that sanitation was addressed because the Ministry of Health was involved and implies dealing with women compared to institutions that think in terms of infrastructure instead of societal aspects.

They underlined the importance of gender training linked to an activity/action so it wasn't just something theoretical. It was linked to daily tasks and showed the difference that gender could make. Government staff were out and about and seeing how gender is working. That while agencies talk about participation at the community level, we have to remember to use it on ourselves at the institutional level. That was the case of Pakistan. It recognized the larger societal context and there was a mandate from the top. A bottom-up participatory approach is important, but some kind of mandate, whether external or internal/national political pressure, is also necessary.

## Case 4 – The Policy

### **Government of South Africa, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry**

The South African constitution speaks to the right of access to sufficient food and water, the right to environment that is not harmful and the right to not be discriminated against. The radical shift in South Africa due to the elimination of apartheid has provided the opportunity to develop new and equitable policies for the new society.

In 1997, a Water Services Act was promulgated which considers access to domestic water and sanitation as a basic human right and which holds government fully responsible for ensuring the basic need is met. Later, in 2000, the government went a step further, committing that the first 6000 liters per household per month were to be delivered for free as Free Basic Water. In 1998, after an extensive process of public participation, the National Water Act was promulgated. This addresses all aspects of water resources management. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry also has a Gender Policy which guides the full suite of activities of the department.

The creation of the new water policy was a participatory process and a wide range of groups participated in its formulation. The policy calls for gender mainstreaming in water policies and provision and also mentions health and the link to children. Water is no longer an assumed right, but now formally acknowledged by the department.

On the other hand, a gender-sensitive water policy and law, as South Africa has through its Constitution (RSA 1996), Water Services Act (RSA 1997) and National Water Act (RSA 1998), is a powerful, foundation tool for change towards gender equity and ending of other forms of discrimination. But as the South African case also indicates, good policy and legislation is not a sufficient condition. After adoption, the hard work lies in implementation – often requiring considerable continuity of the processes that led to the policy and law in the first place. Implementing institutions are key because a policy or law is only as effective as its implementing institutions. The ultimate and only yardstick of successful policy and law is concrete change on the ground.

Women should be included in decision-making, and this is fundamental approach to equitable society. If we condemn women to the lowest position, we condemn society.

### **In Conclusion**

Value of policy and legislation is measured through implementation

Gender aspects must be explicit

Impacts and implementation must be monitored and evaluated

Public participation in development of policy and legislation enhances quality

Empowerment of grassroots women is essential

A quota system is useful but not sufficient

Institutions should be driven by values and principles

From the **Questioners**, Mr. Meenakshisundaram questioned how the bureaucracy would properly implement an equitable approach? How to make sure that the right people get the water? How to operate the system and who is going to pay for it? Maintain it? Who owns the scheme at the local

level and who takes care of it? Will ownership of water services be given to local communities? And find some mechanisms for sharing costs of maintenance?

In South Africa, the local government is responsible for water provision. In terms of maintenance of the system it is their responsibility. Currently are transferring schemes to local governments and also reducing staff from national level. SA does have some local community managed projects especially in rural and small communities.

Jon Lane, **questioner**, wondered how one moves the bureaucracy and implements a good policy? According to Barbara Schreiner, “the 1994 revolution helped to move the bureaucracy and new people from different backgrounds have come into the bureaucracy such as the community and activists and they bring new energy into the department”.

“There has been a process to inform all levels of government about the new policy, sure not all know about it. Departments are very big. Now we have new amalgamated local governments and new boundaries which makes working with local government difficult. They are new and vary across the country. Small rural district local governments very different than Joburg for example. Working to build capacity to actualize the new policy. The biggest implementation problem has been getting everybody on board and trained with relevant and sufficient tools.”

From the **public**, the question of who owns the water? This issue is not being discussed here. In South Africa, the National Water Act says water belongs to the national government as a public trust. Now access to water is a different issue. First advice is to public option, and if this does not work then private sector is an option. There are government guidelines for this. Five local authorities have private water and there have been some problems. This will not go down as the best way to provide water.

Another question on if women are involved in policy and programme development? There is a big gap between policy and practice. Works better with NGOs that implement government policy, as in the case of Muvla Trust. Muvla Trust feels they are more successful than government. Women are involved in decision-making and this varies place-to-place depending on strong women being present or not.

A question from Japan, “Is it true that due to the un-affordability of electricity, energy was cut and people could not use their water pumps in South Africa? Is South Africa introducing pre-paid water system?” Could only happen after people get their free water.... So don’t know how it would happen. Already issues of the need to retrofit technology to fit policy.

**Judges** agree that the South African policy case provides a good example of how gender can be integrated in policy, which is itself based on a strong constitution. Also important to note the policy was developed through a multi-stakeholder process. Quotas are good but need to look at both qualitative and quantitative indicators for quotas to ensure that right people are in the right places. They also noted that implementation of policy is a challenge. Is there a multi-stakeholder process for implementation? What will community ownership of water look like in this situation? Noted that basic water policy comes out of the poverty eradication strategy based on providing water for free for some and not for all.

### **Closing Comments by the Facilitator, Ms. Maliha H. Hussain**

Gender mainstreaming needs approaches that are based on an in-depth understanding of society and also in recognition of the diversity of society – gender, poverty, ethnicity, minority and majority communities, etc. The cases presented illustrate examples of many realities and complexities. But challenges lie ahead. We have only taken a small step forward. Follow-up action is still weak and the interest of men cannot be sustained. Yes, men can afford to lose interest but women cannot.

Gender is only introduced when systems break down and is not thought of as a pre-condition for projects to be implemented. So, it is better to incorporate gender mainstreaming from the start. Examples show that in the medium term the investments made in gender mainstreaming will make the projects and programmes sustainable. We should build on the strength of women and not only focus on their vulnerabilities. Norms and institutions need to be changed, as they are crucial for empowerment. Many challenges lie ahead. Thus, there is a strong need for action at different levels as has been raised today.

### **Closing Comments from the Questioners by Jon Lane**

Today, a wide range of cases from around the world have been presented. When we talk about gender it is part of the larger equity debate that also includes young and old, etc. We also need special efforts to focus on men so they are not marginalized.

Other issues debated during the session:

- The need to develop more sophisticated qualitative gender indicators;
- The importance of building considerations of gender from the beginning rather than at the end. Gender mainstreaming involves a wide range of activities and aspects. It is perceived to be expensive especially by critics but it is incumbent on gender advocates to argue this case;
- Gender mainstreaming is about change, we heard comments that change takes time but requires strong political leadership. Change involves development work with a lot of institutions and should come from both fieldwork and policy.
- Developing policy is a large task but implementing even larger. Many outside this room are skeptical about gender mainstreaming and its implications. There are only 3 water policies in the world that are gender inclusive. We have a long and uphill task ahead of us as we are dealing with a fundamental social issue.

### **The Judges' Verdict**

- Mainstreaming gender in water resources management is critical
- Explicit inclusion of gender issues in national water policies provides the framework
- Gender sensitivity in institutions provides the basis for implementation
- NGOs can be intermediaries and catalysts for introducing gender perspectives and linking communities with governments
- At the community level, it was increasingly obvious that both men and women need to be empowered to deal with change

## Commitments by Governments, International Institutions and NGOs

Responding to some of the calls for action made by the **gender advocates**, some of the governments and organizations present at the session agreed in further mainstreaming gender with the following commitments:

### Government of Brazil

Gender mainstreaming is a main commitment of the new Brazilian government. At the policy level, President Lula de Silva's administration set up a Special Secretariat for Women's Rights at the Ministerial Level. The recently reorganized National Water Resources Council was provided a presidential decree from March 12<sup>th</sup> onwards that provides a seat for this Special Secretary for Women's Rights. We welcome cooperation with the Gender and Water Alliance, primarily for the "Zero Thirst" Programme that is still being developed. As stated by Minister Maerina Silva when she took office, "Zero Thirst" aims to ensure that each Brazilian will have access to adequate and quality water supply. The Programme aims to integrate all governmental action and to call for civil society participation.

### Government of Sri Lanka - Minister of Irrigation & Water Management:

Establishment of a new unit in the Ministry of Irrigation & Water Management for mainstreaming gender.

### Asian Development Bank

ADB and GWA will sign a letter of intent "Gender and Water Partnership". This partnership will be a mechanism for regular dialogue and collaboration between ADB and GWA on mainstreaming gender into water resources and management policies, strategies and programmes, including that of disaster and flood management programmes.

This partnership will be a collaboration on gender capacity building; developing good practices and facilitating country and regional dialogue.

### UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNDP will be continuously updating the UNDP Resource Guide on Mainstreaming Gender into Water Management, in collaboration with the Gender and Water Alliance. UNDP will establish (a) specific targets for increased participation of women in CAPNET programmes and emphasis on gender perspective in learning materials and programmes of CAPNET participating institutions (b) special focus on support to strengthening of women's groups within the activities of the community water initiative and (c) highlight gender perspective in the strategy and work of the MDG water task force.

### UN DESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

In cooperation with the Gender and Water Alliance, UNDESA will incorporate a proposal on the second of the series of the Gender and Water Development Reports as part of the portfolio for funding mobilization under the International Year of Freshwater 2003 and beyond. UNDESA will incorporate gender into strategies for implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments made at WSSD in water supply and sanitation, and will be involved new task force on Water and Gender within the Interagency Network on gender issues.

### Building Partnerships for Development

Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation recognises that gender issues are critically linked to institutional arrangements around the provision of water and sanitation services. As institutional arrangements shift as a response to sector reform, understanding how this impacts on gender roles is imperative. Whilst this will be context and culture specific, are women still sitting at the table when the table gets bigger including more institutional players? BPD thus plans to work together with the Gender and Water Alliance to develop a gender audit tool to be used specifically for analysing partnership situations. The audit tool will be tested initially in three-four partnership projects before being made available more generally.