

Session Report

Session Title: Gender in Court
Date: 17th March, 2003 (09:00 – 16:00hrs)
Name of Convener(s): Ms. Jennifer Francis, Ms. Catarina Fonseca
Reporter/Rapporteur: Prabha Khosla and Rebecca Pearl
Contact E-mail : fonseca@irc.nl

1. Key Issues

The Gender in Court session reviewed 7 case studies:

Community level: Colombia and Cambodia

NGO level: Mali and Dominican Republic

Institutional level: Pakistan and Laos

Policy level: South Africa

The session's "judges" highlighted the following points as key issues:

- 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 cope with changes in gender relations

The following issues emerged from the case studies:

- Include all groups and ages to build social equity.
- Identify and prioritize water uses by women and men to inform planning, policy and programs.
- Invest resources in participatory approaches.
- Ensure that participatory processes do not become an additional burden on women.
- Training and capacity building for women should include technical, financial and leadership training.
- Include women in disaster mitigation meetings and assist communities to recognize disaster situations.
- Involve women in technology decisions and in the development of new technologies.
- Develop qualitative indicators to measure changes in attitudes and gender relations.
- Engage men in health and hygiene education and projects.

- Build on women's strengths and don't only focus on their vulnerabilities.
- Take research on gender to implementation/action stage.
- Give men incentives to participate and sustain gender equity for both women and men in water management.
- Amend constitutions to ensure women's equality and rights.
- Promote quotas for women's participation in decision-making.
- Ensure that gender training is linked to specific and immediate actions.

2. Actions

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

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.

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.

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.

Women and men should be considered the first stakeholders of water resources and not only as beneficiaries of a project or programme.

Gender mainstreaming with gender-trained staff should begin with project conception and continue throughout the project cycle.

Regular and long-term follow-up is needed so that changes related to water and gender equity become sustainable.

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

3. Commitments

Government of Brazil:

Gender mainstreaming is a principal commitment of the new Brazilian government. At the policy level, President Lula de Silva's administration has 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 12th 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 participation of civil society.

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

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

Hon. Gramini Perera

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, as well as be part of a 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.

4. 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 into new leaders for the future. New leaders who will lead by example of democratic participation and gender awareness.

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

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.

Water disaster construction projects – such as roads, embankments, wells and irrigation – must help create jobs and income for women, while not increasing women's workloads.

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.

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.

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