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African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD)

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**Advisory Services
To
Practitioners working on
GENDER AND WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA**

MISSION REPORT

Pretoria, South Africa, 07 – 10 March 2005

**By
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1. Introduction

In December 2003, during the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON) held in Addis Ababa, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) made important commitments to mainstreaming gender into water resources management. The conclusions of the PANAFCON stressed the need *'to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account, through a recognised process of consultation with AMCOW, in policy formulation in all sectors of water, sanitation, human settlements, agriculture and food security including harmonization of policies and laws and the domestication of international treaties to create equity and equality by 2005'*.

To follow up these gender commitments, the ECA Subregional Office in Zambia, jointly with ECA's Sustainable Development Division and UN-Water/Africa, organized a seminar on Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa, on 09 March 2005 in Pretoria.

The main aim of the seminar was to translate the gender commitments into an implementable 10-year action plan for mainstreaming gender in Africa's water policies, programmes and projects to be adopted by AMCOW. It was foreseen that the action plan would coincide with the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life', starting from 22 March 2005. The seminar was also intended to strengthen partnerships for enhanced gender advocacy in the water sector. It further aimed at increasing awareness among the participants on the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management. The objectives were:

- 1) To promote the implementation of the African Ministerial Commitments on gender and water (PANAFCON 2003);
- 2) To initiate policy dialogue aimed at developing a concrete action plan for mainstreaming gender in all activities developed in Africa as part of the International Decade for Action: "Water for Life" 2005 –2015;
- 3) To create awareness for the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management for improving women's lives and sustainable development.

Around 60 participants from governments, research institutions, NGOs and UN-agencies attended the seminar. This included both water experts with limited involvement in gender and water issues and gender and water advocates.

The seminar resulted in the preparation of a draft action plan to mainstream gender in Africa's water policies, programmes and projects in 2005-2015.

2. Objectives and activities of the mission

Along the preparatory, organization and follow up process to the seminar, ACGD collaborated with the SRO office in Zambia and SDD for the following:

2.1 Design of the seminar programme

Prior to the seminar, ACGD provided input to the SRO and SDD on the elaboration of seminar programme, based on the following topics addressed in working group sessions:

- Gender mainstreaming in water resources management;
- Water, Gender and Public Health;
- Equitable access to water for productive use;
- Gender, water and ecosystems;
- Improved participation by actual water users in water programmes and projects for increased gender responsiveness and sustainable development;
- Mainstreaming gender in national, regional and basin water policies and collaboration between ministries.

2.2 Identification of potential participants

ACGD provided feedback on the draft list of participants suggested by the SRO and SDD, which was taken into account in the final list of people invited.

2.3 Presentation of the main paper on gender and water resources management at the plenary

The paper entitled '*why is it critical to mainstream gender in water resources management*' was articulated around the following:

- Gender: concepts and approaches;
- Political commitment and legal frameworks for mainstreaming gender into water resources management in Africa;
- Gender, poverty and water resources management: key issues;
- The ten elements for gender mainstreaming in water resources management.

The issues addressed in the paper presented at the plenary session informed the working group sessions. The paper is attached in annex 1.

The chief of the SRO, Mr Dickson Mzumara, OIC, undertook to disseminate the article to further increase sensitization on the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management.

2.4 Co-facilitation of the working group session on mainstreaming gender in national, regional and basin water policies and collaboration between ministries

The working group session was attended by about 20 participants and led to the identification of the following priority areas:

- Training of engineers to include social/gender aspects;
- Empowerment of women through information based on a rights based approach;
- Collection of credible and disaggregated data on water, sanitation and hygiene, and gender by proper reporting;
- Assessment of the gender sensitivity of country's water policies and legislation and the establishment of reporting mechanisms;
- Shared learning between countries, especially from countries that have mainstreamed gender in policy/law;
- Strengthening of the links between policy and implementation;
- Development of gender indicators and reporting mechanisms;
- Linkage between continental, regional and subregional commitments with national/basin water policies.

The main recommendations of the group were the following:

- Development and promotion of practical guidelines for implementation of gender mainstreaming in IWRM;
- Development of information and knowledge management systems on gender and water.

3. Recommended follow up actions

The following next action steps are recommended:

- ACGD should collaborate with the SRO/Lusaka and SDD for the finalization of the draft action plan on mainstreaming gender in policies and programmes of the water sector.
- ACGD should participate in the peer review of the African Water Development Report to be published as a flagship by SDD in December 2005 to ensure gender equality concerns are addressed.

ANNEX 1

Paper on:

WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO MAINSTREAM GENDER IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA?

By Tacko Ndiaye

Economic Affairs Officer

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1. Introduction

Africa faces striking levels of poverty that feature in water deprivation for an important proportion of its population. 300 million people have no access to safe drinking water. Environment degradation and unsustainable water consumption patterns have led to a shrinking water resources base and threaten human security. Water scarcity affects disproportionately women and girls, especially in rural areas, due to great disparities in rights, decision-making power, tasks and responsibilities over water for productive and reproductive activities.

Because women represent the great majority of the poor in Africa, and because of the strong interaction between water, and food security, health, sanitation, girls' education, economic productivity and environmental protection, poverty eradication requires 'engendering' water resources management. In the midst of increasing and competing water demands for agriculture, industrial development, food production, power generation and drinking water, unequal power relations between genders, classes and races result in important discrepancies in access to and control over water. Failure to address the interlinkages between gender, poverty and water will jeopardize the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.

Bridging gender and poverty gaps in water resources management has become a priority in various policy-making and awareness raising circles such as the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and its WASH campaign on 'Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all' in over 40 countries. In December 2004, the Global WASH Forum held in Dakar endorsed the creation of the 'Global WASH advocates'. This consists of a group of women leaders dedicated to advocate for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all. Key among their planned actions are the collection and provision of sex-disaggregated data and the improvement of decision-making processes. At the December 2003 Pan African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water, African Water Ministers renewed their commitment to ensure that gender equality concerns inform water policy-making.

Gender equality in WRM catalyzes interest, expertise and collaboration from a variety of actors.

First, this paper starts by introducing key gender concepts and approaches. Second, it revisits the legal framework for mainstreaming gender into water resources management in Africa. Third, it highlights the interrelations between gender, poverty and water. Fourth, it gives some recommendations for mainstreaming gender into water resources management.

2. Gender: concepts and approaches

2.1 What is gender?

Gender refers to social meanings given to ‘natural and unchangeable’ biological sex differences. It is a social, cultural and political construct changeable over time with great variations within and between cultures and societies. It affects:

- The way women/girls and men/boys access education and health care;
- The distribution of resources, wealth and other means of production such as land, water, appropriate technology, energy, etc;
- The sexual division of work and responsibilities between women and men at household, community and other public spheres and the way such work is valued and remunerated;
- The way women and men participate in decision-making and political power; and
- The enjoyment of rights and entitlements within the family, the community as well as in public life.

Gender disparities result from the persistence of an ideological, political, economic and socio-cultural system that favors men and boys at the expense of women and girls and that denies the validity of specific concerns, needs or interests.

Gender analysis allows understanding of the social construction of gender relations that underlies asymmetrical access to social capacities, economic opportunities and political voice and power. It also takes into account the heterogeneity and interactions of other social stratifiers such as class, age, race and ethnicity.

Fostering gender equality requires to recognize male and female identities, value and address equally their specific practical needs and strategic interests, and establish a balanced distribution of responsibilities and entitlements. A policy is qualified gender

blind when it ignores or fails to address gender equality concerns or gender neutral when it has no differential impact, either positive or negative, for equality between women and men.

2.2. Gender approaches

The 'traditional' needs-based approach to gender focuses on the link between gender relations and communities' well-being. It recognises the detrimental effects of inadequate gender relations on the fulfilment of human needs and on the efficiency and effectiveness of development initiatives. Because it stresses the benefits of improved gender relations for both men, women, children and communities, such approach can be seen more friendly, particularly to men who may see empowering women as a way to their own disempowerment.

The new conceptual shift from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach to gender allows putting equality and equity issues within a human rights and development framework. It empowers women and men to demand justice when their basic needs such as access to clean water, are not met, and provides communities a moral basis to claim international assistance. It moves policy debate and discourse from non-discrimination towards a commitment to gender equality and equity. A rights-based approach to gender and water resources management recognises equitable access to water as an inalienable human right whose realisation becomes the responsibility of all actors in development within the international community and within States at all levels (local, national and international levels). Water for all then turns into a goal in itself, giving women and men 'rights-holders' legal entitlements to claim from 'duty bearers' such as the State and development partners its realisation.

2.3. What is gender mainstreaming?

The ECOSOC agreed conclusions of 1997 define gender mainstreaming as *'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality'*.

Gender mainstreaming requires a strong political commitment to mobilise legal instruments, financial resources and analytical and organisational

capacities for providing equal opportunities to women and men in all spheres. It goes beyond promoting women and men's equal access to social capacities, economic opportunities and political power. It encompasses the promotion of an enabling environment for removing all barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment, including those related to family structures, sexual division of labour in the productive and reproductive sectors, and gender stereotypes.

Ensuring equal opportunities to women/girls and men/boys at all levels (individual, household, community, state, region, global) and all spheres (physical, sociocultural, religious, political, legal and economic) means addressing:

- ⇒ 'Equality' issues through equal access, participation, control and treatment of women and men stakeholders in all policies and initiatives.
- ⇒ 'Equity' issues by acknowledging existing gender disparities and by taking, when appropriate, positive discrimination measures to bridge the gender gaps. Equal treatment of persons or groups in unequal situations will simply perpetuate inequalities. A positive or affirmative action is a measure targeted at a particular group and intended to eliminate and prevent discrimination or to narrow disadvantages arising from existing attitudes, behaviors and structures.
- ⇒ Violation of women's human rights through removing legal and non-legal barriers to women's empowerment and gender equality.

3. Political commitment and legal frameworks for mainstreaming gender into water resources management in Africa

In July 2004, African Heads of States renewed their political commitment to address gender gaps by adopting a solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa. The Constitutive Act of the AU also emphasized the need for gender-balanced development, thus enabling the monitoring of gender equality in the Union's policies and programmes.

Article 18.3 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights adopted in Nairobi in 1981 specifies that the state *'shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and children as stipulated in international declarations and conventions'*. In July 2003 the Protocol on the Rights of

Women in Africa to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights was adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government in Maputo – Mozambique, reinforcing the commitments made in the Charter.

The African Ministerial Commitments on Implementation and Partnerships for achieving the water and sanitation targets of the African Ministers Council on Water addressed Gender and WRM and Sanitation in Africa. The African Water Vision is based on principles of equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development and regional cooperation. These various commitments towards gender equality are also featured in the gender policy of various sub-regional bodies.

At international level, water as a human right was affirmed by General Comment 15 on the right to water, adopted in November 2002 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which states: *'the Human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses'*. Annex 1 of the Gender and Development Water Report 2003 gives an overview of the Commitments on Gender and Water made at key international conferences between 1979 and 2002. These include legally binding as well as consensus documents. Key among them are:

- ⇒ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, December 1979: CEDAW is one of the most ratified conventions with 98 signatory countries and 179 ratifications in October 2004. Article 14 (2) emphasizes the right of women to 'enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity, water supply,
- ⇒ The Beijing Platform of Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995, and the review processes, emphasized the need to mainstream gender equality concerns in all policies and programmes for sustainable development. It recommended Governments to promote knowledge and research on the role of women, particularly rural and indigenous women, in irrigation, watershed management, sanitation.... The Declaration also supports equal access to clean water; the establishment of mechanisms at all levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women; the development of gender sensitive databases and information systems; and the analysis of structural links between gender relations, environment and development.
- ⇒ The Political Declaration and Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, September 2002, advocated for gender sensitive water and sanitation infrastructures and services, equal access

in decision making at all levels, and improved access of women to land, property and technology.

- ⇒ The Ministerial Declaration and Bonn Recommendations for Action, International Conference on Freshwater, Bonn, December 2001, stressed the need to ensure equality of access, voice and participation in managing the sustainable use of water resources and sharing benefits. Water policies and management systems should be shaped in a participatory manner and take into account the sexual division of work.
- ⇒ The Ministerial Declaration of The Hague on Water Security in the 21st Century, The 2nd World Water Forum, The Hague, March 2000, highlighted the main challenges in meeting basic water needs, particularly for women, and the need for integrated gender responsive water management and adequate resource allocation.
- ⇒ The Millennium Declaration, Millennium Summit, New York, September 2000, set the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as its goal 3, providing the opportunity to make it a cross-cutting issue in all other goals such as poverty and hunger eradication and environmental sustainability.
- ⇒ The ICPD PoA and ICPD +5, Cairo 1994 and New York 1999, underlined the linkages between women's low status, water deprivation and poverty.
- ⇒ The Strategic Approaches to Freshwater Management, Commission on Sustainable Development, 6th session, New York April 1998, urged Governments to mainstream gender in all aspects of WRM.
- ⇒ The Habitat Agenda, Habitat II, Istanbul, June 1996 made a strong commitment on gender equality in human settlements and on the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender- disaggregated data.
- ⇒ The World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, March 1995, recognized the disproportionate burden of poverty on women, characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs including safe drinking water and sanitation.
- ⇒ The UN Convention to Combat Desertification in countries experiencing serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, Paris, June 1994, insisted on the importance to ensure full participation of women and men to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of droughts.

- ⇒ The Commission on Sustainable Development, 2nd Session, New York, April 1994, stressed the need to involve local communities, in particular women, in WRM.
- ⇒ The Political Declaration and Agenda 21 of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, June 1992, highlighted the vital role played by women in environmental management and their essential participation for the achievement of sustainable development. It advocated for the designing, implementation and evaluation of economically efficient and socially appropriate programmes with the full participation of women. The Declaration also insisted on equal access to education and training programmes, equal participation in decision making related to WRM and the reduction of women and girls' workload. The International Conference on Water and Environment, Dublin, January 1992, made similar recommendations.

4. Gender, poverty and water resources management: key issues

All aspects of human life and economic activity require access to clean water to be sustained, whether in the reproductive, productive or community sectors. Water deprivation perpetuates and amplifies income poverty and human poverty, which affect mostly women in Africa. Water is a cross cutting issue in all aspects of poverty alleviation, economic growth, sustainable development and gender equality:

- ⇒ **Water for economic productivity**: the availability of clean water is a pre-requisite for the development of agriculture, industries and services.
- ⇒ **Water for food security**: agricultural production and food processing depend on the availability of clean and affordable water. Agriculture is the driving force behind economic growth in most African countries. The achievement of the MDG on reducing poverty and hunger relies heavily on water.
- ⇒ **Water for girls education and women's empowerment**: The sexual division of work ascribes water-related tasks to women and girls. Improving access to clean water is a key factor for promoting girls' education, especially in rural areas. Girls' education has a multiplier effect on combating early marriages and pregnancies, promoting child and maternal health, nutrition and sanitation,

reducing population growth and improving women's status. Educated women have better access to decent and paid employment and better opportunities to participate in decision-making levels.

- ⇒ **Water for allowing women to combine family responsibilities and participation in public life:** women's time capital is distributed between market economic activities, non-market economic activities and domestic, care and voluntary activities. Most of women's water-related tasks fall within domestic, care and voluntary activities. The heavy workload of fetching water for family and community needs shrinks their time resource base available to engage in paid activities and public life.
- ⇒ **Water for public health:** floods, droughts, pollution and other water related hazards threaten public health, sanitation and hygiene. Women and girls are the most exposed to many water-related preventable diseases as they are more likely to be in direct contact with contaminated water. Walking long distances to collect and transport water also carries risks of personal security and women's fatigue, particularly in times of pregnancy.
- ⇒ **Water for energy production:** energy poverty affects mostly women in Africa. Due to the lack of appropriate and affordable sources of energy, poor African women and men use their 'body' energy to collect fire wood, process food, etc. The running of appropriate technology to reduce women's workload requires the availability of energy sources, which also depends on water.
- ⇒ **Water for environmental protection,** Poor people heavily depend on coastal ecosystems and availability of fresh water to sustain their livelihood. The human and environmental costs of weather, climate and water related disasters affect disproportionately the poor.

While water is an argument of gender equality, social justice, human rights and economic efficiency and sustainability, great disparities persists for various reasons:

- ⇒ Current macroeconomic frameworks foster trade liberalisation, privatisation and fiscal austerity. With trade liberalisation agreements and policies, water has become a tradable good. Transferring the responsibility of water provision at an affordable price from the State to private companies has also shifted the

location and nature of accountability. Private companies are more accountable to their shareholders than to citizens of countries where they operate. It is critical to find a balance between ensuring economic sustainability with cost recovery and meeting basic needs. Poor families in many African countries, especially those headed by women, face the difficult choice to buy food or pay water bills.

- ⇒ Water allocation mechanisms give priority to industrial and power production at the expense of household needs. Macroeconomic policies tend to consider households only as consumption units while the household economy, dominated by women, produces 70% of food in Africa. Women's coping strategies in the informal sector to combat poverty take place at household level through the cleaning, conservation, storage and preparation of crops. Macroeconomic models neglect that segment of the economy that sustains the labour force of 'productive' sectors and many tariff subsidies continue to favor the rich rather than the poor.
- ⇒ Gender disparities in all sectors are also reflected in inequalities with regard to access to and control over water resources. There are important discrepancies between women's workload in relation to water and their entitlements and participation in decision-making related to WRM. Women are responsible for meeting most or all of a family water needs, but men control decision making processes related to water allocation and protection.
- ⇒ Women's multitasking and heavy workload are aggravated by water deprivation. They often have to walk long distances to fetch water, thus missing opportunities to engage in paid work or to participate in leisure activities. Women and girls are obliged to walk many hours every day fetching water, while men are rarely expected to perform such tasks. A 2002 UNICEF study of rural households in 23 sub-Saharan countries evidenced that 25% of women spend 30 minutes to an hour each day collecting and carrying water, and 19% spent an hour or more.
- ⇒ Water deprivation affects girls' schooling in many African countries, thus undermining their right to education and health.
- ⇒ Many water projects and programmes fail to take into account women and men's multiple and different roles and needs in water. The lack of proper

stakeholder and problem analysis from a gender perspective, affects the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of water management initiatives. Decisions about the design and location of water facilities have to be made with the involvement of female and male users and stakeholders..

- ⇒ The lack of sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics on gender and water hinders the formulation of sound gender responsive WRM policies.

Lifting African women and men out of the vicious circle of poverty and water deprivation will require applying effective gender mainstreaming to WRM. Water governance needs to be based on human rights principles to which African countries are signatories to, including these addressing gender inequality. Women and men's perspectives as providers of social services at household level, entrepreneurs, and water users must inform WRM policies and initiatives.

5. The ten elements for gender mainstreaming in WRM

The following ten elements are required to effectively mainstream gender equality concerns into water resources management:

5.1. Define the conceptual framework for gender, poverty and water within mainstreaming in water resources management

The conceptual framework should comprehensively capture the multiple aspects and linkages of poverty and water deprivation as they relate to gender equality concerns, as well as analyze societal processes that perpetuate the problems. It should articulate a rights-based approach to gender equality in water resources management.

5.2. Engender negotiation processes of water treaties and documents

The negotiation and ratification of international and regional agreements on water should be informed by gender equality and human rights documents, as well as women and men's realities and coping strategies. Consultation processes should be inclusive to reflect the perspective of all actors involved in gender and water resources management.

5.3. Adopt laws to implement and monitor internally and regionally agreed goals on water for all

The translation of international and regional documents in national legislation is critical to ensure their effective implementation. This also involves repealing all legislations, which are discriminatory against women and/or men with regard to water resources management. Specific measures should be taken to remove other 'invisible' non-legal barriers to women's equal participation in decision-making on water management, through redefining power relationships and confronting gender stereotypes.

5.4. Develop policies and plans to operationalize gender equality in WRM

WRM policy proposals should be assessed to see whether they will affect women and men differently, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that any discriminatory effects are neutralised and that gender equality is promoted. Policies and plans that increase women's water-related workloads should be avoided. The plans should set measurable and achievable targets to narrow gender gaps in WRM and clearly state the political commitment to equal access to and control over water.

5.5. Establish/strengthen institutional structures and mechanisms to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in WRM

A gender approach should be fostered with regard to building/strengthening institutions and organizations responsible for WRM. Gender mainstreaming requires a strong commitment of top leadership, the capacity of staff to articulate gender concerns in procedures, tools and instruments and the setting-up of clear accountability mechanisms. The gender specialist in water management institutions should be located at a high level to influence decision-making. Capacity building in gender analysis is often needed to positively change individual and collective perception and behavior towards gender equality. Efforts to ensure adequate representation of women and men at decision-making levels should be combined with a vision to foster transformational leadership in WRM.

5.6. Allocate adequate human and financial resources for gender mainstreaming into WRM and engender resource mobilization processes

Water deprivation has great social and economic implications, such as the low social status of women and the perpetuation of poverty. The appropriate costing of

resources needed to bridge gender gaps in access to and control over water can inform budgetary processes in the water sector. It is also critical to apply gender 'budgeting' to water by assessing the differentiated impact of resource allocation on women/girls and men/boys.

Resource mobilization processes should also be gender responsive. For example, it is important to evaluate how taxation/user fee on water affect differently women and men from various categories.

Human resources involved in WRM should be at the appropriate level, in sufficient numbers and with adequate capacity in gender mainstreaming.

5.7. Mainstream gender equality concerns in water programmes and projects

All water initiatives should be grounded in a comprehensive stakeholder and problem analysis highlighting:

- ⇒ The diversity of women and men's roles, responsibilities, constraints and coping strategies with regard to water;
- ⇒ The unmet sexo-specific water needs of various socio-economic categories: who needs water, for which purpose, at which level;
- ⇒ The local knowledge and expertise in WRM and protection, and the owners of such knowledge.

The identification of appropriate interventions should be done in consultation with the various groups of stakeholders, while ensuring that gender and power relations do not introduce biases in the process. Key areas of particular relevance for women's empowerment include pro-poor small irrigation systems, water saving and storage techniques, and the development of appropriate technology to reduce their workload. The protection of ecosystem and maintenance of reliable supplies of clean water are also of great importance to sustain women and community livelihoods.

Equal opportunities for participation of women and men, as staff and beneficiaries should also be guaranteed, and when necessary, specific activities targeting women should be planned to reduce existing disparities. The planned outputs, outcomes and impacts should focus on alleviating poverty and bridging gender gaps in water resources access and control.

5.8. Carry-out gender impact assessment of water policies and programmes

Criteria for assessing the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of water initiatives should focus on poverty reduction and gender equality. The indicators for measuring the outputs, outcomes and impacts should be sex-disaggregated and include qualitative as well as quantitative indicators.

5.9. Conduct research to generate specialized knowledge on gender and WRM

Research and studies highlighting specific gender issues, good practice examples and differentiated impact of policies and interventions on women and men should be systematically conducted, at local, national and regional levels. This will inform the definition of policy options for equality.

5.10. Collect gender disaggregated data

Sound gender responsive water policies should be grounded in production and use of gender disaggregated data (GDD) on access to water at all levels. The lack of gender disaggregated data leads to poor knowledge system and poor analytical approach of problems and solutions. The major action is to strengthen the national bureaus of statistics for the production of GDD in water and for the development of appropriate analytical tools to use GDD. A second major action in this area is to develop tools to track progress made in reducing gender inequality in access to and control of water resources.

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**Economic Commission for Africa
Southern Africa Office, Lusaka, Zambia**

Water 4 Life

**Report of the Seminar on
Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa**



9 March 2005

Pretoria, South Africa

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA**



**NATIONS UNIES
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POUR L'AFRIQUE**

SOUTHERN AFRICA OFFICE (ECA/SA)

ECA/SA/S/Gender/2005/05

9 May 2005

**Seminar on Gender and Water Resources
Management in Africa**

**9 March 2005
Pretoria, South Africa**

**REPORT OF THE SEMINAR ON GENDER AND WATER
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACGD	African Centre for Gender and Development
AMCOW	African Ministers' Council on Water
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECA-SA	Economic Commission for Africa Office in Southern Africa
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
GWP	Global Water Partnership
GWP-SA	Global Water Partnership Southern Africa
IUCN	World Conservation Union
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
IWSD	Institute of Water and Sanitation Development
PANAFCON	Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDD	Sustainable Development Division
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

A. BACKGROUND OF THE SEMINAR

1. The seminar on Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa, jointly organized by UN-Water/Africa, ECA's Office in Southern Africa (ECA-SA), and ECA's Sustainable Development Division (SDD), took place as a follow-up to the gender commitments made by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) during the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON, December 2003, Addis Ababa).

2. The main aim of the seminar was to translate the gender commitments in an implementable 10-year action plan for mainstreaming gender in Africa's water policies, programmes and projects to be adopted by AMCOW. The action plan would coincide with the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life', starting from 22 March 2005. The seminar further aimed at strengthening partnerships for enhanced gender advocacy in the water sector. In addition, it aimed at participants' increased sensitization on the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management and at imparting ideas on how to incorporate a gender perspective in their own work. Specifically, the seminar had the following objectives and expected output:

Objectives:

- 1) To promote implementation of the African Ministerial Commitments on gender and water (PANAFCON 2003);
- 2) To initiate policy dialogue aimed at developing a concrete action plan for mainstreaming gender in all activities developed in Africa as part of the International Decade for Action: "Water for Life" 2005 –2015;
- 3) To create awareness for the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management for improving women's lives and sustainable development.

Expected output:

- 1) Recommendations for implementation and achievement of the AMCOW gender commitments;
- 2) Strengthened partnerships for an AMCOW action plan of mainstreaming gender issues in the International Decade;
- 3) Enhanced sensitisation on the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management at all levels (regional, basin, national, local).

B. ATTENDANCE

3. Fifty-six participants attended the seminar. These included representatives from the governments of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, representatives from research institutions, community-based organizations, and NGOs from Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, attended. UN-HABITAT and UNICEF Angola, and WMO were represented. Other participating international organizations represented included the Global Water Partnership (GWP), IUCN, the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and the Institute of Water and Sanitation Development (IWSD). The

group constituted of both water experts with limited involvement in gender and water issues and gender and water advocates. The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.

C. OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SEMINAR

4. The Coordinator of the UN Water/Africa group and Senior Regional Adviser of Water Resources Development & Management, Dr. S.M.K. Donkor who initiated the Seminar started proceedings with brief opening remarks and introduced Mr. Dickson Mzumara, Officer-in-Charge of ECA-SA to Chair the Session. In his opening statement, Mr. Mzumara welcomed the participants and thanked the government of South Africa for hosting the seminar. He referred to the objectives of the seminar and explained that the seminar was a follow-up to the gender commitments made by the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) during the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON) in December 2003 in Addis Ababa. He made reference to the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, which already expressed concern over the integration of a gender perspective in policies and programmes for sustainable development and called for equal access to safe water. He further provided the linkage with the African Water Vision and its gender commitments, recently endorsed by the African Union, which preceded the PANAFCON. He then highlighted important events and activities as well as organizations in the area of gender and water, including the International Decade Water for Life, the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force, the WASH forum, and the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA).

5. In her opening statement by H.E. Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry in South Africa, read on her behalf by Ms. Barbara Schreiner, Deputy Director General Policy and Regulation, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), South Africa, the Minister welcomed the participants to Pretoria. She explained the relevance of gender issues in water management and made reference to the PANAFCON following the gender targets set in the African Water Vision. The Minister thanked ECA and UN-Water for the organization of the seminar and other activities to support the implementation of the African Water Vision. She further welcomed the participants on behalf of AMCOW. In addition, she shared information and best practices about the way gender has been mainstreamed in South Africa's water policy documents placed into the framework of post-apartheid South Africa. Best practices included the legal mechanisms in place to reallocate resources from those who have been favoured by history to those who have been neglected, the cooperation with other Ministries, and a quota system for appropriate community, racial and gender representation in catchment, regional and local water institutions. Furthermore, she highlighted the appointment of previously disadvantaged persons in the Ministry and training for its officials in gender issues.

6. After the statements, a video was shown highlighting the impact of poor water conditions' on poor people's and especially poor women and girl's lives.

D. SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

7. The official opening was followed by a plenary session with three presentations, discussing the concepts of gender, illustrating the importance of mainstreaming gender in water management, and paving the way for work to be done in parallel sessions.

Participants thereafter worked in thematic group sessions to define concrete recommendations in the form of a draft action plan for mainstreaming gender in Africa's water policies, programmes and projects within the framework of the International Decade for Action. The parallel sessions' findings were presented in plenary, after which the way forward was discussed. The provisional organization of work and the annotation of the parallel sessions are attached as Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

1 Plenary presentations

8. Ms. Tacko Ndiaye, Economic Affairs Officer, ECA's African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD), presented a paper with the title: 'Why is it critical to mainstream gender in water resources management in Africa?' She explained the different gender concepts and gender approaches and how they relate to water issues. She further explained the linkage between gender, poverty and water deprivation, which she also related to key gender issues such as gender insensitivity of current macroeconomic frameworks, discrepancies between women's workload and their entitlements, women's limited participation in decision-making related to water resources management, and the lack of sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics. In conclusion, she presented a framework for mainstreaming gender in water resources management, with main emphasis on defining stakeholders and users, priorities, the different levels of operation and achievable targets.

9. The presentation was followed by a 'case study example on mainstreaming gender in water resources management in Africa: South Africa', presented by Barbara Schreiner, Deputy Director General Policy and Regulation, DWAF, South Africa. She presented a paper co-written together with Barbara van Koppen, Principal Researcher, Africa Regional Program, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and Shalili Misser, Transformation Unit, DWAF. She presented the policy/legal framework on gender and water issues adopted by the South African government and informed participants about the quota system to guarantee equal participation by gender and race in decision-making in the newly established catchment management agencies. Particular attention was given to the process towards the adoption of this policy measure following long consultations and discussion with stakeholders. She stated that it had been particularly difficult to get marginalized groups and especially poor women involved. She further indicated the present state of affairs as being in an infant state and indicated the challenge of bridging the gap between policy and implementation. The lessons learned by the government were mainly: the important role of the state in the empowerment of women and the need for gender-disaggregated data for effective policy-making and implementation.

10. The third presentation by Saskia Ivens, Associate Gender Expert, ECA-SA, introduced the participants to the work for the parallel sessions. The presenter made the linkage between the African Water Vision gender commitments, followed by the gender commitments arising from the PANAFCON, and the draft action plan to be developed during the seminar. The expected output of the parallel sessions related to the objectives and expected output of the seminar: to come up with concrete recommendations in the form of a draft action plan for mainstreaming gender in Africa's water policies, programmes and projects within the framework of the International Decade for Action. An action plan framework for use in the parallel sessions was presented.

2 Parallel sessions

11. Parallel sessions were organized in the following areas:

- 1) Water, gender and public health
- 2) Equitable access to water for productive use
- 3) Gender, water and ecosystems
- 4) Improved participation by water users in water programmes and projects for increased gender responsiveness and sustainable development
- 5) Mainstreaming gender in national, regional and basin water policies and collaboration between ministries.

12. The group discussions on the action plan were preceded by presentations by the facilitators of the sessions and a few other presenters. The presentations introduced the participants to the subject and its key issues, after which the priority areas for action in the area of the session's theme were discussed and concrete objectives and activities were defined. See Annex 2 for an overview of the presentations and a detailed description of the sessions' contents.

3 Plenary session: reports from parallel sessions and way forward

13. During the plenary session, the group made reports on their work. Each group presented priority areas for action and concrete objectives and planned activities. Following the group reports, the way forward from the seminar to a finalized action plan was discussed.

3.1 Reports from parallel sessions

14. Parallel session 1 focused on 'Water, Gender and Public Health'. The group reported that after presentations and discussion, including a general overview, a case study from Sudan, the Millennium Development Goals and the Declarations of Niamey and Bamako, it identified the priority areas for action as follows:

- Define indicators and collect baseline data disaggregated by sex at various levels;
- Review how the country gender policy strategies relate to the AMCOW commitments;
- Set-up or strengthen monitoring systems and data information management;
- Set-up an Africa Hygiene network including civil society;
- Improve sanitation provision;
- Focus on women in decision-making and women's technical expertise as crosscutting issue;
- Conduct regular livelihood analyses with a focus on improved health, transformation of structures at policy and organizational level and attention to vulnerability and access to resources;
- Raise awareness on gender and water management at different levels;
- Consider culture and religious sensitive actions as crosscutting issue;
- Improve urban sanitation.

15. Parallel session 2 centered its discussions on the theme 'Equitable access to water for productive use'. Following presentations and discussion on essential women's land and water issues and African water laws and their impact on gender relations and women's access to water for productive use, the group identified the priority areas for action as follows:

- Improve communication between local people and high-level policy makers in all areas and levels;
- Improve communication between the different stakeholders including departments of water, agriculture, land, environment, finance and local government in all actions and levels;
- Build upon community-based natural resource management and indigenous knowledge;
- Secure access to land by women;
- Ensure access to credit/financing institutions by women irrespective of land title;
- Enhance agronomy research and extension;
- Improve access to markets;
- Enhance research and training services in the field of gender and water;
- Guarantee access to water at an affordable cost;
- Improve access to appropriate technologies;
- Improve the availability of infrastructure for multiple water uses;
- Pay attention to formal water rights;
- Ensure fair distribution of water, by prioritizing small-scale water uses;
- Give priority to domestic and small-scale water uses by women and men in transboundary water issues;
- Support gender commissions to mainstream gender in water and other production factors.

16. The theme for parallel session 3 was 'Gender, Water and Ecosystems'. Presentations included reflections on key issues and challenges for improved water governance and the gender mainstreaming strategy initiative of UN-HABITAT's Water for African Cities Programme. Following discussions, the following priority areas for action were identified and presented:

- Build capacity for gender-sensitive policies and regulations for the management of ecosystems at various levels;
- Pay proper attention to gender roles and traditional wisdom in ecosystem management;
- Address water requirements for the protection of ecosystems;
- Define and collect baseline information and indicators on ecosystems.

17. Parallel session 4 focused on 'Improved Participation by Water Users in Water Programmes and Projects for Increased Gender Responsiveness and Sustainable Development'. After presentations and discussions on gender networking for improved participation in water programmes and projects and the experiences of a case study pilot

project on rainwater harvesting in Kenya by both the organizers and participants, the group identified the priority areas for action as follows:

- Build the capacity of water managers to analyze and address gender issues at project management level;
- Develop guidelines on gender mainstreaming at all levels from policy making to implementation and use by the beneficiaries;
- Conduct research projects to identify existing initiatives for change processes and share best practices;
- Improve gender-disaggregated data collection in the area of water;
- Provide training in IWRM for committees;
- Ensure replication of successful projects, e.g. the rainwater harvesting project in Kenya;
- Undertake regular assessment of the quality of participation of women in water resources issues;
- Establish country water partnerships in Southern Africa;
- Construct more ferrous cement tanks in the Rift Valley in Kenya;
- Increase public participation in water projects;
- Mainstream gender at school level;
- Improve the management of droughts, floods and desertification by 50% in Africa;
- Share experiences of water projects related to gender issues, review the need for centres of excellence or clearing houses;
- Develop a programme on water supply and sanitation for the SADC region.

18. The theme for parallel session 5 was 'Mainstreaming Gender in National, Regional and Basin Water Policies and Collaboration between Ministries'. Following a short presentation on the topic and discussion, the group identified and presented the priority areas for action as follows:

- Include social/gender aspects in the training curricula of engineers;
- Empower women through the provision of information based on a rights based approach;
- Collect credible and gender-disaggregated data on water, sanitation and hygiene;
- Assess the gender sensitivity of country's water policies and legislation and establish reporting mechanisms;
- Promote learning between countries, especially from countries that have mainstreamed gender in policy/law;
- Strengthen the links between policy and implementation;
- Develop gender-sensitive indicators and reporting mechanisms;
- Link continental, regional and subregional commitments with national/basin water policies.

19. In summary, the main recommendations of the last group were:

- Develop and promote practical guidelines for gender mainstreaming in IWRM;
- Develop information and knowledge management systems on gender and water.

3.2 Way forward

20. The seminar participants discussed the way forward from the seminar to a finalized action plan. They decided that a core team consisting of ECA, the facilitators, and a number of other participants would continue work to finalize the draft action plan by the end of April. They further agreed that the main recommendations of parallel session 5 on mainstreaming gender in water policies would be treated as a kind of framework which all the other recommendations would fit. When the action plan has been finalized and discussed among the group members, it will be shared with other UN-agencies after which it will be sent to the African Ministers' Council on Water.

E. OFFICIAL CLOSURE OF THE SEMINAR

21. Ms. Ethne Davey, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa, Chair of the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), and Vice-Chair of the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWP-SA), read a message from Ms. Marcia Brewster, Task Manager of the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force (see Annex 3). She focused on water as an important strategic resource, essential for sustaining life and development, personal dignity and human security. She raised the related gender concerns including women's limited access to and control over water despite of the role they play in water management, conservation and safeguarding health. She further indicated the benefits of improved water and sanitation access to women and society as a whole, such as improved health and education, economic benefits and increased food security. She argued that more training for water specialists in social development, sanitation and hygiene education is needed as well as affirmative action programmes to train more women in water and sanitation. The appointment of women water ministers in several African countries was applauded and she hoped that these women ministers would change the nature of the debate and policies in water resources and sanitation management. She further expressed her wish that the seminar would bring a network of committed individuals forward to work together in the International 'Water for Life' Decade.

22. The representative of the South African government, Ms. Barbara Schreiner, thanked the participants as well as the organizers for their contribution to the seminar. She appealed to participants to facilitate UN-Water/ECA's work in finalizing the action plan and she asked everyone to use the new contacts for strengthened partnerships and advocacy for gender equality in water resources management.

Annex 1: Provisional organization of work

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA**



**NATIONS UNIES
COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE
POUR L'AFRIQUE**

**Distr.
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ECA/SA/S/Gender/2005/info.1
8 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH

SOUTHERN AFRICA OFFICE

Seminar on Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa

**Pretoria, South Africa
9 March 2005**

PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK

08:00-09:00 hrs	Registration
09:00-09:45 hrs	Official Opening of the Seminar Statement by the Representative of ECA Opening Statement by the Representative of the Host Country
09:45-10:30 hrs	Plenary presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why is it critical to mainstream gender in water resources management in Africa? (Tacko Ndiaye, Economic Affairs Officer, African Centre for Gender and Development, ECA)- Case study example on mainstreaming gender in water resources management in Africa: South Africa (Barbara Schreiner, Deputy Director General Policy and Regulation, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa)- Introduction to the parallel sessions and recap of the

gender and water commitments of the African Water Vision and PANAFCON (Saskia Ivens, Associate Gender Expert, ECA Southern Africa Office)

10:30-11:00 hrs	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>
11:00-13:00 hrs	Parallel Sessions Water, gender and public health Equitable access to water for productive use Gender, water and ecosystems Improved participation by water users in water programmes and projects for increased gender responsiveness and sustainable development Mainstreaming gender in national, regional and basin water policies and collaboration between ministries
13:00-14:00 hrs	<i>Lunch Break</i>
14:00-15:30 hrs	Continuation Parallel Sessions
15:30-16:00 hrs	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>
16:00-17:30 hrs	Plenary session Report from parallel sessions & way forward
17:30-18:30 hrs	Official Closure of the Seminar Message from the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force Award of certificate of participation Closing Statement by the Host Country
19:30 hrs	Dinner/reception

Annex 2: Annotation – parallel sessions

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8 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH

SOUTHERN AFRICA OFFICE

Seminar on Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa

**Pretoria, South Africa
9 March 2005**

ANNOTATION - PARALLEL SESSIONS

SESSION 1: WATER, GENDER AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Facilitators: Noma Nyoni-Neseni (Deputy Director Operations, Institute of Water and Sanitation Development, Zimbabwe)
Salamatou Mariko (Director, Women Network for Development, Niger)

Presentations:

- Gender issues in water, public health and sanitation (Noma Nyoni-Neseni)
- A case study on the experience of Sudanese Development Association (SDA) in implementing water management project with especial emphasis on gender (Manahil Ibrahim, Ministry of Irrigation, Sudan)
- Overview of the Millennium Development Goals on water, sanitation and health (Noma Nyoni-Neseni)
- Water, gender and the declarations of Niamey and

Bamako (Salamatou Mariko)

Contents: Urban and rural women's specific needs for drinking water and sanitation related to their socio-economic and marital status and age. The health consequences and its burden on women and men, the responsibility and role of stakeholders in the provision of safe water and sanitation in urban and rural areas. E.g. the implications of unsafe water and lack of sanitation, the distance to water or water privatisation. What can AMCOW do to reach MDG goal 7, target 10 and to ensure sustainable access for 'all' to safe and adequate water supply and sanitation services to meet basic needs?

Recommended literature: Makoni, Fungai S., Gift Manase, Jerry Ndamba, Patterns of domestic water use in rural areas of Zimbabwe, gender roles and realities
&
Declarations de Bamako et Niamey (in French)
&
Ibrahim, Manahil, A case study on the experience of Sudanese Development Association (SDA) in implementing water management project with especial emphasis on gender (ECA/SA/S/Gender/2005/04)
&
UN Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation, Health, Dignity, and Development: What Will it Take? Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Final Report, Abridged Edition
&
WASH Forum endorses concept of women WASH advocates, press release

SESSION 2: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER FOR PRODUCTIVE USE

Facilitators: Ethne Davey (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa, chair Gender and Water Alliance, vice-chair Global Water Partnership Southern Africa)
Barbara van Koppen (Principal Researcher, Africa Regional Program, International Water Management Institute)

Presentations:

- Essential Women's Land and Water Issues (Ethne Davey)
- African Water Laws: the impact on gender relations

and women's access to water for productive use
(Barbara van Koppen)

Contents: Poor women and men's specific water needs for productive use and how these are linked to water rights and land tenure. The responsibility and role of stakeholders in the provision of water for productive use (e.g. farming and other income-generating activities) to all –including the poor and poor women in particular. Where access to water is linked to land tenure, what are women's legal rights to land tenure and to what extent does it influence their access to water? What can AMCOW do to fulfill poor women and men's specific water needs for productive use thereby to ensure that water does not become the limiting factor in food security, how to make sure women's multiple water needs are taken into account?

Recommended literature: African Water Laws Workshop, Plenary Statement of Participants

SESSION 3: GENDER, WATER AND ECOSYSTEMS

Facilitators: Tabeth Chiuta (Water Programme Coordinator, IUCN ROSA)
Julie Perkins (UN-HABITAT)

Presentations:

- Reflections on Key Issues and Challenges for Improved Water Governance (Tabeth Chiuta)
- UN-HABITAT's Water for African Cities Programme: Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Initiative (Julie Perkins)

Contents: The impact on poor women and men of climate variability and water scarcity, because of over-exploitation of renewable and non-renewable water resources and the pollution and degradation of watersheds and ecosystems. How could (women's) traditional knowledge about the protection of water sources be used for integrated water resources management? What is AMCOW's role?

Recommended literature: Chiuta, Tabeth, Gender, Water and Ecosystems: Reflections on Key Issues and Challenges for Improved Water Governance (ECA/SA/S/Gender/2005/03)

SESSION 4: IMPROVED PARTICIPATION BY WATER USERS IN WATER PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR INCREASED GENDER RESPONSIVENESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Facilitators: Mildred Mkandla (External Relations Director, EarthCare Africa Policy Monitoring Institute, Kenya)
Yvette Ramos (consultant, representing WMO)

Presentations:

- Gender networking for improved participation in water programmes and projects (Yvette Ramos)
- Case study from a pilot project on rainwater harvesting in Kenya (Mildred Mkandla)
- Experiences in participating in the rainwater harvesting project (Agnes Kimer, Secretary, Namelok Kipuo Dokoya, Kajiado, Rift Valley, Kenya)
- Benefits of participating in the project and its impact on the community especially women and girl children (Alice Ngiroiya, Water management team committee member, Namelok Kipuo Dokoya, Kajiado, Rift Valley, Kenya)

Contents: How can AMCOW encourage women to participate as water users during planning and implementation of water activities at community level to ensure that the water needs of women and poor men are addressed? Is an enabling environment created at the local level and are financing arrangements sustainable? E.g. using women's water wisdom, building women's capacity for sustainability of the management of the water projects, incorporating indigenous knowledge and perspectives, ensuring gender-sensitive technology, women's access to credit and finances, and the use of a pro-poor approach. The session will also consider how to ensure that gender-sensitive ideas at national government level are implemented at community level.

Recommended literature: Mkandla, Mildred, Pro-poor Strategies to Meet Basic Needs: The Case of Women and Rainwater Harvesting in Kajiado District, Kenya, in: African Water Journal

SESSION 5: MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND BASIN WATER POLICIES AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN MINISTRIES

- Facilitators:** Barbara Schreiner (Deputy Director General Policy and Regulation, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa)
Tacko Ndiaye (Economic Affairs Officer, African Centre for Gender and Development, ECA)
- Presentations:** (In plenary session)
- Contents:** To what extent has gender been mainstreamed in the different water policies of national governments, water basin organisations and IGOs? Have water policies and laws been harmonised with other relevant policies and laws that affect gender relations (e.g. is collaboration taking place between ministries of water and housing, health, gender and agriculture)? Have regional and international water treaties that affect women and men been domesticated? Has an enabling environment for mainstreaming gender in water resources management at national, regional and basin level, been created and are the financing arrangements sustainable? Are gender-disaggregated water data collected at national and local level and are they applicable to and used for policy-making? The need for institutional reform, e.g. are women taking up key positions in water decision-making bodies? How to secure and retain skilled and motivated female water professionals? What is AMCOW's role?
- Recommended literature:** Schreiner, Barbara, Barbara van Koppen, Shalili Misser, case study example on mainstreaming gender in water resources management in Africa: South Africa (ECA/SA/S/Gender/2005/02)

Annex 3: Message from the Interagency Gender and Water Task Force



Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa Workshop
Pretoria, 9 March 2005

Women's Access to Water: a security issue
Message from Marcia M. Brewster
Task Manager, Interagency Gender and Water Task Force
United Nations Division for Sustainable Development

Chairperson, Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen

For women in Africa who lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation, these amenities are a matter of survival, personal dignity and human security.

Water is increasingly becoming an important strategic resource, essential for sustaining life and development. Control over water is a source of power and economic strength, and it can be a root cause of socio-political stress. Gender considerations are at the heart of providing, managing and conserving our limited water resources and safeguarding health through proper sanitation and hygiene.

As women are primarily responsible for the use and management of water resources and sanitation, they have accumulated an impressive store of environmental wisdom, being the ones to find water, to educate children in hygiene matters and to understand the impact of

poor sanitation and health. At the same time, women and girls are obliged to walk many hours every day to collect water, which may expose them to threats of violence and health hazards.

Having access to water nearer the household reduces the time women and girls spend collecting water, allowing them time for other activities, including training, childcare, growing food and income generation programmes. Yet women often have no voice and no choice about the kind of services they receive.

Improving access to water and sanitation and changing hygiene behaviours have large benefits to society as a whole (through improvements in health, education and the economy in general), which justify continued public sector support to communities and households. The success and effective use of water and sanitation facilities will depend on the involvement of both women and men in selecting the location and technology of such facilities, and taking responsibility for management, operation and maintenance.

The role for women in constructing and maintaining water and sanitation facilities should not be underestimated; it can vary from fundraising to active work on construction, preventive maintenance and repairs to paying for water with labour.

Food security is often dependent on women's subsistence production to feed families. This, in turn relates to access to water for productive use, and may be dependent on land rights. Women's accumulated knowledge is valuable for managing and protecting water sources and

watersheds. Women and indigenous groups will only have secure access when they are recognized as citizens, landholders and contributors to the development process.

It is clear that for increased security of water supply and sanitation, training and capacity building is much needed. At present most of the training available is aimed at water resources and water supply specialists, with very few programmes in developing countries aimed at expertise in social development, sanitation or hygiene education.

However, in countries such as South Africa, Lesotho and Uganda affirmative action programmes have been introduced to train women for water and sanitation related careers, including science and engineering. At the local level, women have found their voices and have now been trained to locate water sources in the village, decide on the location of facilities and to repair pumps, resulting in a considerably decrease incidence of breakages.

It is interesting to note that in these three countries, the Ministers of Water Resources are Women.

Our UN Interagency Task Force on Gender and Water has been working with some of these women ministers of water and compiling recommendations for action to secure access to water and sanitation for women and men during the Water for Life Decade, which will begin on 22 March. The recommendations are contained in the paper: "A

gender perspective on water resources and sanitation”, which you have received.

It is my conviction that for the first time in history the women ministers of water and environment constitute a critical mass of people who can change the nature of the debate and policies in water resources and sanitation management.

The issue of water security for women in Africa is one of the most fundamental problems facing them. This event is extremely valuable in defining the issues and developing a network of committed individuals who will work together to find solutions to these problems. We look forward to working together with all of you during the International ‘Water for Life’ Decade.

On behalf of GWP and GWA I would like to Thank UNECA (United Nations Water/Africa Economic Commission for Africa) for inviting us to participate in the Water for Africa conference.

Thank You

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REF: PRG 220

Dear Ms. Ndiyaie,

Seminar on Gender and Water Resources Management in Africa

First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your active participation in the seminar on 9 March 2005. I would like to both recognize and thank you for the work you did before coming to Pretoria and your active and highly professional involvement in the seminar, both of which contributed to the success of the seminar.

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to the commitments made during the last plenary session of the seminar. You will recall it was decided that a core team consisting of ECA, the facilitators, and a number of other participants would continue work to finalize the draft action plan by the end of April 2005. So as to take the process forward, I wish to propose the following:

- 1) The facilitators and other interested participants continue the work on the action plan for each parallel session with a view to finalizing by 8 April 2005 at the latest. The main focus is on the prioritization of the defined key actions and the completion of the action plan framework from objectives to risks.

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- 2) ECA will compile a first draft action plan out of the different frameworks from the different groups between 11 and 22 April 2005, taking note of the agreement that the main recommendations of the group on mainstreaming gender in water policies (group 5) would be treated as a framework in which all the other recommendations could fit.
- 3) The first draft action plan will be sent to you for your review in the week of 25 April 2005.
- 4) After incorporation of your suggestions, the draft action plan is sent to the other UN-agencies for their review, after which it can be sent to the African Ministers' Council on Water.


We suggest that we maintain the same group composition:

- Session 1 (water, gender, public health): Noma Nyoni-Neseni, Salamatou Marikou, Manahil Ibrahim;
- Session 2 (water for productive use): Ethne Davey, Barbara van Koppen;
- Session 3 (ecosystems): Tabeth Chiuta, Julie Perkins;
- Session 4 (participation by water users): Mildred Mkandla, Yvette Ramos, Shalili Misser and Ditshego Magoro;
- Session 5 (water policies): Barbara Schreiner, Tacko Ndiaye, Ruth Beukman and Evelyn Otim.

Dr. Andah may want to indicate in which group he was participating and which group he would wish to join.

Once again let me thank you for your dedication and contribution to this important task. I look forward to hearing from you on the follow-up actions proposed above.

Yours sincerely,


Dickson W. Mzumara
Officer-in-Charge