

Priorities for Action from the Women's Major Group at CSD

January 2005

On Promoting Women's Participation and Empowerment

1. The principle of women as participants in the CSD process and the acknowledgment of women as key actors in the use and management of water, sanitation and human settlements now needs to be put into practice. This is in line with the outcomes of CSD-12 that explicitly stressed the central role of women at all levels and stages of water, sanitation and human settlements in order to be successful. We need concrete ways to have women participating in their own right in the CSD process and beyond. Based on these considerations we strongly urge the Bureau to incorporate "**women and water**" as a separate theme in CSD-13.

On Access to Water, Land and Human Rights

2. We prompt a right-based approach regarding water, sanitation and human settlements.
3. It is important to recognize that women's access to water is directly related to access to other natural resources, specifically land. Promote and support efforts and initiatives to secure equitable access to land tenure. Clarify resource rights and responsibilities through land and tenure reform processes that respect the rule of law and enable women producers to become decision makers and owners in the sector. This will also make women eligible for loans and funding regarding water and sanitation.
4. Eliminate constitutional and legal barriers that bar women from owning or inheriting land, as agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
5. Women's rights to land, water and other natural resources must be incorporated into the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

On Financing

6. The majority of the total funds must be accessible at the local level to help empower women and other disadvantaged groups. These funds should include longer term financing and flexible financing for cross-cutting issues such as capacity building, vocational training and gender sensitive needs.
7. Allocate funds and other resources to women's organizations to identify their own priorities to successfully address women's practical and strategic gender needs. These organizations should serve as full partners – and not just recipients – in water, sanitation and housing initiatives.

8. Finding new mechanisms of financing is very important. Funds have to be dedicated, allocated and reach the right actors, specifically women and the youth. Many case studies show that women have proven that they are capable of managing funds and to find additional funds when they have started capital. Therefore, gender sensitive instruments such as gender sensitive budgeting, have to be part of the financial tool kit.
9. In order to implement gender as a key cross-cutting issue in the ten-year work plan of the CSD, all institutions and programs dealing with human settlements, water and sanitation should ensure that the involvement of women is a central factor in their policies, programs and budgets. In order to achieve this, they should use tools such as gender-disaggregated data, gender effect analysis and monitoring evaluation and systems that use gender indicators.

On the Role of the Private Sector

10. Water is a public good. Water and sanitation and water facilities should stay under government's responsibility and accountability. Therefore, governments' involvement in terms of affordability, quality and access to water and sanitation needs to be guaranteed through new or reformed legislation.
11. Women's capacity building in water and sanitation must be part of every plan of implementation. This will ensure proper usage, management, maintenance and supply of water and sanitation facilities and will also stimulate economic development by ensuring women access to jobs.
12. Cost recovery cannot mean full cost recovery, especially regarding sanitation in poor communities. Governments must subsidise sanitation facilities and make sure they are gender sensitive.

On Integrated Water Resources Management Plans

13. Mainstream pro women strategies in Integrated Water Resources Management Plans, emphasizing women full involvement in programme and project development, implementation and evaluation.