

# Women's Statement

Commission on Sustainable Development Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting  
New York, New York  
28 February-4 March 2005

The world has duly recognized and emphasized through the many world conferences held during the past decennia that it does not wish to disregard half of the world population comprised of women. As a matter of fact, it is a key cross-cutting issue in the ten-year work plan of the Commission (CSD-11). The implementation of water, sanitation and human settlement policies therefore, Mr. Chairman forms an essential part of women's lives, livelihoods, health and security. Implementation thus means as recognized by CSD-12, to mainstream gender in planning, decision-making and management and in short enhancing the roles and status of women as key stakeholders and agents of change.

In light of these foundations laid by previous CSD meetings, we have formulated our recommendations for policy implementation of water, sanitation and human settlements. We think it also opportune that the CSD Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting is taking place at the same time as the Beijing+10 review at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. At this occasion, the Secretary General made the following recommendations:

1. To invest in infrastructure to reduce women's time burden, including women's access to water;
2. To guarantee women's access to land and the right to inheritance.

Our first recommendation concerns the linkages of gender mainstreaming throughout the CSD, CSW, and MDG processes in the UN and its member countries.

We, the Women's Major Group, further suggest strengthening these linkages for policy implementation in the Secretary General Reports for CSD 13 through the following recommendations:

- 1) Reinstating women and water to appear as a major topic in the Commission on Sustainable Development 13 agenda and that a fund is created to facilitate the implementation of gender as a cross-cutting issue in the ten-year work plan of the CSD, as agreed in CSD-11.
- 2) Women should be considered as vital stewards who "should be recognized as active citizens with full rights including land tenure and equal access to credit business" (CSD-12 - Para 75 Part I), and who are able to participate in the designing of an appropriate and sustainable solution to the problems related to water, sanitation and human settlements.
- 3) Recognize that women access to water is directly related to access to natural resources specifically land and 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.

- 4) Eliminate constitutional and legal barriers that bar women from owning or inheriting land, as agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
- 5) 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 gender 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 analysis, gender responsive budgeting initiatives, gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems and gender-sensitive indicators.
- 6) National and local governments should make clear and measurable commitments to ensure that sanitation policies are gender sensitive, by enabling the participation of women at all levels in the policy framework process and its implementation and by involving women in the designing of sanitation facilities.
- 7) Make sure that women are ensured access to safe sanitation, including eco-sanitation. Subsidies, if necessary, should be economically and socially sound and take into account the power relations within families. For example, sometimes cash subsidies for latrines given to men are not used for installing latrines, which are a female and not a male priority.
- 8) Make sure that women community-based organizations are included in the dialogues, partnerships and consultations with governments and decision-makers.
- 9) Gender concerns should be integrated in the Integrated Water Resources Management Plans, and women should be fully involved in their development and implementation.
- 10) The promotion of private sector development of natural resources should take into account women's knowledge and subsistence activities for economic development.
- 11) Implementation of MDG 7 targets (ensure environmental sustainability) should be linked to the MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and 3 (promote gender equality and empower women).
- 12) CSD should launch a gender strategy for implementing MDGs on water and sanitation.
- 13) All governments should immediately ratify the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Countries, which have ratified CEDAW, should ensure its implementation to the fullest.
- 14) Ad hoc working groups on women should be created for all international environmental treaties.
- 15) Study, document and disseminate the gender aspects of natural disasters and global climate and environmental change processes, involving local women as experts.

As the United Secretary General said during the CSW, "No tool is as effective for development as investing in women."