

Intervention by Women Major Group – CSD13 - 3 March 2004, afternoon

We would like to talk about gender-mainstreaming:

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.

We need concrete ways to have women participating in their own right in the CSD process and beyond.

Instrumental in gender-mainstreaming in environment in general and in water, sanitation and human settlements in particular, is working with women's organizations at all levels. In preparing for the meeting on Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) UNEP and WEDO facilitated an online discussion on Women and the Environment. We can recommend you to learn lessons from that discussion. The online discussion was very lively, and many women's organizations shared their experiences and visions in environmental areas. There is a lot of expertise available not only on the other side of this corridor in the CSW: we have to involve such gender expertise in our environmental organisations and initiatives. There is an urgent need to involve more professional and local women in physical planning, water and sanitation sectors: but also here the glass ceiling still exists.

Most of all we need political will for real gender mainstreaming within our own institutions. There are many instruments available: gender-analyses, sex-disaggregated data, close monitoring and evaluation, learning lessons from what we have learned until now. Including a gender focus in the Integrated Water Resources Management Plans and in MDG7 activities and reporting. It particularly means ensuring that the activities we undertake in the three areas (w/s/hs) benefit local women on the ground.

UNEP's Governing Council just last week has adopted a decision on gender equality and environment. CSD should learn lessons from that, and at least put 'women and water' as a specific issue on the agenda of CSD13.