



TIME FOR SOLUTIONS



***When moving from **vision** to **action**,
from **policies** to **implementation**
the principal actors change***

On the eve of World Water Forum 6 we, the Women for Water Partnership, would like to share our concerns with all stakeholders at the forum:

There is a hole in the bucket!



The Dublin/Rio Principles (1992) for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) address the importance of the participatory approach to achieve effective water governance at the lowest appropriate level (Principle 2). Furthermore, they highlight the central role of women in the provision, management and safeguarding of water (Principle 3).

So... where do we stand on the eve of Rio +20?

Women are one of the nine Major Groups of Agenda 21 (Rio 1992): organised segments in society that have their own specific role in addressing the challenges of sustainable development and in contributing to solving the problems we face on water and food security. Without the full and equal participation of these Major Groups, and especially the Civil Society segment to which the **Major Group Women** belongs, implementation will not take off properly, and projects will continue to fall short on sustainability, ownership and good governance.

Empowerment of women is key to achieving sustainable development. The Women for Water Partnership defines empowerment as: ownership of decisions and having access to the means to make informed choices to implement your decisions, together with other relevant stakeholders. Addressing empowerment means: to create an enabling environment for women (and other Major Groups) in order to actively take part in development. This approach is enshrined in Agenda 21 and the Dublin/Rio Principles for IWRM.

There is hardly a website in the development field which does not make reference to the need for empowerment of women. **How do we proceed from lip service to women's empowerment to actual implementation?**

Much emphasis has been given in the past decades to legal and institutional frameworks. And rightly so. Now that we have this sufficiently in place – particularly at the international level, but in many instances also at national level – our urgent appeal to decision makers is to go full speed into **implementation**. We seek these solutions in Marseille.

Women represent the majority of the poorest of the poor, the Bottom Billion bypassed by many development initiatives. But women are not mere victims, they are a huge untapped force of **agents of change**. For example, with 70% of the world's 1.4 billion extremely poor living in rural areas of developing countries, and the majority of them being women smallholder farmers, the potential of rural women to contribute to the eradication of hunger and poverty is huge and increasingly acknowledged. At the same time, women and their organizations themselves receive less than 1 % of the total development budget. **Do you see a solution?**

The deliberations at the World Water Forum should hold national governments accountable for providing an enabling environment for empowerment of women, also at local levels. This will only work if there is a **re-allocation** of available funds to reflect the different roles and to make sure that all key actors – including the Major Group Women – can indeed participate on an **equal footing**.

Room for improvement? YES. It's time for a solution!



The enabling environment for women's concerted action, however, is poorly developed. The Beijing Platform for Action (BfA, 1995 – chapter K) - the principal action agenda for women's empowerment and full and equal participation of women in society - acknowledges the non-governmental sector and particularly women's organizations and feminist groups as **a driving force for change**. How does the Water sector support this change? What is the solution?

**The Women For Water Partnership seeks this solution in Marseille!
Let's get together to fix the hole in the bucket!**



Come and hear our solutions

Please join us at the two key events organised by the Women for Water Partnership:

1. Women's pre-conference: Women Leadership in Water,
10 & 11 March at Cité des Associations and Hotel Mercure Marseille Centre
2. High level special event Women & Water
14 March, 8.30 hrs. at the Prado

During the Women's preconference to the World Water Forum on the 10th and 11th of March:

Women from different countries around the world will present reality cases on Women's role in Water and Food Security, Community Water Supply, and Sanitation and Water - including the right to water & sanitation – and Peace and Security from a Women's Perspective, including transboundary issues.

Our venue for Saturday 10th March will be Cité des Associations, Salle Artémis, 93, La Canebiere, Marseille and our venue for Sunday 11th March will be Hotel Mercure Marseille Centre, 1, Rue Neuve Saint Martin, 13001 Marseille. The final program for the Prep-Conference for the two whole days will be published on our website (www.womenforwater.org).

Women for Water Partnership - being a worldwide strategic alliance of local, national and international women's organizations and networks, active in the areas of sustainable development, water & sanitation, poverty and gender - has successfully organized preparatory meetings prior to previous World Water Fora in Mexico and Istanbul (Turkey).

We are also actively present in:

- Side event on World Water Report Development Report Launch, *World Water Assessment Programme, 12th March*
- High level round tables on transboundary waters, Water for health, Water & climate change, Water, food, energy nexus, Water for development for Africa; *13 March (t.b.c.)*
- Side event on Community & Water Services - Challenges for Sustainability, *13th March, 13.15*
- Side event on transboundary waters and peace and cooperation, *13 March, 19.30*
- Event on water footprint and water stewardship, *13 March*
- Butterfly Effect NGO coalition session on Human right to Water
- River basin session 3.1.2, *15 March, 8.30*
- Final panel for 1.1. implementation of the Human right to water & sanitation
- Event of UNSCAB/Germany on 5 Year Drive for Sanitation, *German Pavilion, date to be decided*
- Session on peace & water, *1.3.5 (Unesco)*

About Women for Water Partnership:

WfWP consists of 24 women's networks and their subsidiaries which operate in approximately 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the EECCA region and Western Europe. WfWP focuses on women's social and economic development by fulfilling basic water and sanitation needs. The network emphasizes on empowerment, local ownership, equity mainstreaming, partnership, and grassroots development.

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