

... commitments

inadequate infrastructure meant that up to one third of the world's population did not have access to potable water or modern sanitation facilities. Member States adopted a 'Programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21', committing themselves to ensuring that the review of its implementation in 2002 should demonstrate greater progress.

During 1997, intergovernmental bodies such as the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Sustainable Development, focused on water resources management and gender issues. The political commitment by Member States was explicit.



Jorgen Schynte/Still Pictures

'The nutritional level of children is often related to the distance the mother must walk for water'

about the author

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INSTRAW will continue to focus on the structuring and implementation of policies to reach out and involve women in the water sector — a prerequisite for sustainable water programmes.

and synthetic organic chemicals that accumulate along the food chain. Mercury in seafood ingested by pregnant women has been linked to cerebral palsy in infants, and exposure *in utero* to polychlorinated biphenyls from contaminated fish is associated with poorer short-term memory functioning in childhood.

The main goal of W&S interventions is to improve the health and well-being of human beings. It is only through the hygienic use of facilities, however, that improved systems can deliver real health benefits — thus human behaviour is the key to improved health. And because women are central to all aspects of water management, sanitation, and personal and household hygiene, women's roles in influencing family hygiene-behaviour patterns are crucial.

Research and training

What is needed is a structural and attitudinal change in institutions including new integrated management systems in human, financial and natural resources. One of the ways to achieve this is through increasing attention to women in human resource development (HRD). At the heart of HRD is training and research. It is important to make explicit provision, within the section of institutional arrangements for water-resource management, to help countries incorporate women in research and training as well as capacity-building programmes. It is important that governments be enabled not only to desegregate by gender the specific monitoring indicators already identified but also have the capacity to identify new and crucial gender-sensitive indicators.

We have entered an era in which policies will have to be reformulated for all water activities to ensure sustainable development and rational utilization of resources. Women as users, consumers, managers and collectors of water are part of the problem — and the biggest part of the solution — for the water resources management-environmental sanitation-sustainable development relationship.

webwatch

In many parts of the South, specialist literature on water supply and sanitation is hard to come by — and the Internet is becoming a vital source of up-to-date information. We are delighted to launch a regular guide to help you get the most from the 'net'. We start with some of the most useful websites on 'Gender and water'.

● **Briefings on gender and development (BRIDGE)**

Information-analysis service specializing in gender and development issues, aiming to assist development professionals in both government and NGOs to integrate gender concerns into their work. produces issue papers, sectoral surveys, country gender profiles, and annotated bibliographies. Based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex.
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/research/bridge/index.html>
E-mail: bridge@sussex.ac.uk

● **Gender issues network (GENNET)**

Designed to facilitate sharing of ideas, research results, and new developments concerned with gender issues in relation to the W&S sector.
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/cv/wedc/garnet/gennet.html>
E-mail: wijk@irc.nl or francis@irc.nl
For the Development-Gender e-mail network contact: v.clowes@uea.ac.uk

● **Gendernet (World Bank)**

Pilot WWW site (under development April 1998) presenting WB materials on gender issues. Includes section on WB policy and projects, guides to incorporating gender into project design; country-level profiles.
<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/>
See also: Checklist of strategy options for incorporating gender into water and sanitation
<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/tools/watersan.htm>

● **Global Fund for Women**

Resources to seed, strengthen, and link women's groups around the world.
<http://www.igc.apc.org/gfw/>
E-mail: gfw@globalfundforwomen.org

● **United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem)**

Includes full text of Unifem documents and links to related materials.
<http://www.undp.org/unifem/>
E-mail: unifem@undp.org

● **Womenwatch, UN**

Internet site providing a gateway to UN information. Joint initiative of Unifem, Division for the Advancement of Women and International Research (DAW), and the Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>
E-mail: womenwatch@un.org

● **For more links, try the ELDIS site:**

<http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/eldis.html>