

ADDENDUM

to the United Nations World Water Development Report 4, Chapter 35, 'Water and Gender'

Introduction

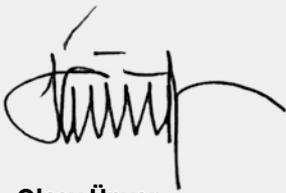
I have the pleasure to present an addendum to Chapter 35, 'Water and Gender', of the United Nations *World Water Development Report*, fourth edition (WWDR4). The fourth edition was a milestone in being the first in which gender was mainstreamed.

So why an addendum? The addendum came about as a natural outcome from the workflow of the United Nations World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)'s Advisory Group on Gender Equality, the members of which, on a voluntary basis, contributed in a very passionate, coordinated and constant manner to the enhancement of WWAP's gender strategy after the publication of the WWDR4.

The need to add the latest relevant insights to the WWDR4 chapter became evident after both the Gender Side Event at the World Water Forum (March 2012) and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ('Rio+20', June 2012).

The addendum contains, first, inputs made by members of the Advisory Group: some inputs are information that has come to light since the writing of the WWDR4 chapter in 2011; some are information that clarifies the original content. Second, WWAP's gender position at Rio+20 and its strategy moving forward in this ever more important subject is outlined in the addendum.

This work was also carried out in the context of a Gender Stakeholder Briefing Note that is being prepared to synthesise gender-related information found across the entire WWDR4.



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1. Inputs to the chapter

Competing uses for water can be added to the list of the many challenges that are significant in the context of gender differences in the access to and control over water resources.

Measures to improve water resource management, increase access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and promote hygiene have the potential to improve the quality of life of several billion women and men, improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and reduce the burden of waterborne diseases. Supporting women's access to and their control over water will in turn improve their access to secure livelihoods and sources of food, which will benefit both their own health and that of their families. Access to water also provides relief to women who walk long distances in unsafe environments to fetch water.

Water is used for a wide range of socio-economic activities including public health, agriculture, energy production and industry. Unsustainable and short-term decisions taken in the context of these activities have an impact on water resources, with different social and economic consequences for men and women in the community. Over the longer term, scarcity created at the local level as a result of such decisions is likely to increase inequality in access to and control over water resources, affecting poor women the most.

With increasing urbanization around the world, the risk of contracting diseases is much higher in low-income areas without access to water and sanitation, with women being the ones carrying most of the burden.

At the international level, the United Nations has kept women's issues on the agenda through the series of World Conferences on Women (starting with Mexico in 1975) and Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (promote gender equality and empower women). Significant progress has been made in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 (see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and through the setting up of UN Women. Water and gender equality is listed as one of UN-Water's Thematic Focus Areas in its Work Programme, and the promotion of gender equality is a global priority of UNESCO, where WWAP is hosted.

Across the world, the gendered organization of farming is diverse and changes with new market opportunities. For example, in Europe and South Asia, men tend to be farm decision-makers. However, in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa both men and women decide and may cultivate separate plots (World Bank et al., 2009). However, this local context has often been ignored in irrigation projects. As a result, irrigation projects that ignored women farmers have collapsed (Van Koppen, 2002).

Improved incomes and economic empowerment may help women improve food and nutrition security for themselves and their children.

It is clear that for the way forward, to meet future challenges in water in all its uses it is necessary to decrease the gender gap in water. Suggested below are action points in three areas (see the WWDR4 for the existing list of suggested actions, which these points complement).

Mainstreaming gender considerations in water governance

- Ensure that the water dialogue is always guided by the General Assembly resolution of 28 July 2010 that declared water as a human right
- Engender water policy to enable the broader participation of women in water
- Ensure that national water budgets appreciate the growth in population and challenges of climate change

Improving women's access to water and other productive resources

- Include the delivery of water as one of the priorities for interventions in conflict ridden areas
- Prioritize water efficiency as a central programme of water security and empower women to lead it

Enhancing capacities of men and women to understand and address gender differences and concerns in water management

- Train and channel girl children to study and prepare for water-related careers

References

- World Bank, FAO and IFAD. 2009. *Gender and Agriculture Sourcebook*. Washington DC, The World Bank.
- Van Koppen, B. 2002. *A Gender Performance Indicator for Irrigation: Concepts, Tools, and Applications*. International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Research Report 59. Colombo, IWMI.
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2. WWAP position at Rio+20

WWAP, as part of UNESCO, was present in Rio at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The outcome document – *The Future We Want* – provides WWAP with the opportunity to take action on many recommendations related to green growth, green accounting, water management and water monitoring frameworks as well as cross-cutting issues such as water accountability, environmental risk management and environmental reporting methods.

WWAP contributed to the gender agenda by raising issues regarding the need for both a greater involvement of women in decision-making and a future monitoring framework – theoretically within the Sustainable Development Indicators – which can take into account differences existing between women and men in the sharing and management of water resources.

WWAP, in its mission and via its programmes, has already been active in promoting a gender-sensitive approach to development, because this approach has a positive impact on the effectiveness and sustainability of water interventions and on the conservation of water resources. Involving both men and women in the design and implementation of water-related interventions promotes development goals, such as reducing hunger and child mortality and improving gender equality.

During the Rio+20 side event ‘Sustainable Development and Water: Global Goal, Targets, and Partnerships’, organized by Finland, and with the participation of WWAP, the need for guidance on how progress can be accurately monitored in order to inform policies was underlined by WWAP. WWAP has been advocating for some time the development of indicators and targets, which are inclusive of sex-disaggregated data, for post-2015 goals.

WWAP believes this is a real challenge for the international community to be able to implement and fully achieve the right to water and sanitation.

Regarding this issue, another important point raised by WWAP was the need for decoupling water supply from sanitation, especially in water stressed regions. To make the difference between the ‘right to water’ and the ‘right to sanitation’ clear, the example of gender-differentiated toilets and sanitation facilities was presented as a concrete case of the obligations falling under the right to sanitation.

Finally, WWAP has, in line with UNESCO, renewed its commitment to providing relevant inputs into the definition of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular to water and gender inclusion in the goals relating to water management and green growth.

In this regard, WWAP is currently working in close partnership with the END working group, led by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, and with AMCOW, the African Ministers’ Council on Water, to advocate for the implementation of ‘water&gender’ strategies in future development and project planning.