

Statement by Women as Major Group, CSD12, 29 April 2004

NOBODY BUT....

Nobody but the millions of poor women of this Earth know better how precious water is for all life. And a clean and healthy environment for our health and future. Water searchers, water carriers, sanitation managers, agricultural producers, entrepreneurs, health workers, builders, housekeepers: What are women not?

Your delegations all agreed to it: Yes, women play a crucial role in water, sanitation and human settlements. Yes, gender mainstreaming is essential to meet our development goals and targets....

However, a peasant woman from Pakistan, preparing for the Rio Conference in 1992 made the critical observation: “ *It is good to give recommendations and pass laws, but will they ever be acted on?*” Or as one of our South African colleagues here at CSD12 stated: “ *What you can do is talk, talk, talk! But do we really walk our talk? And will our words and intentions really make the lives of all these women living in poverty any better?*”

Yes, we need gender mainstreaming. Not just as an intention, but we want to see it happen!

- Where are the local women experts on the platform of the CSD?
- Is it not time – after 12 years of talk – to have a Woman minister chair the next CSD?
- Why has until now no Government reported on the gender aspects of their implementation of MDG7?
- Why do we have to fight again to get local women’s and civil society’s perspectives and interests incorporated in the Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation?

There are many ways in which you really can prove that gender is not just about words: assure 50% representation of women in water management bodies, enact legislation that secures land tenure to women, increase national and international funding and make sure that at least 50% of IDA for water, sanitation and human settlements directly benefits local women, integrate gender in your Integrated Water Resources Management and Efficiency Plans.

Ending poverty is not just about numbers, and laws and infrastructure. It is about securing the rights to our common resources water and land, about preventing profit making from public resources and services, about affordable prices, about polluters that pay, about common but differentiated responsibilities. The challenge lays in real partnerships, public-public, in education for sustainable development, in empowerment of women, in our **COLLECTIVE CARING CAPACITY.**