

## Organization

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC)

# Gender-Disaggregated Data on Water and Sanitation

Expert Group Meeting Report



United Nations Headquarters, New York 2-3 December 2008

*Water, Sanitation and Hygiene photostream*



United Nations



Publication data

Publication date: March 2009

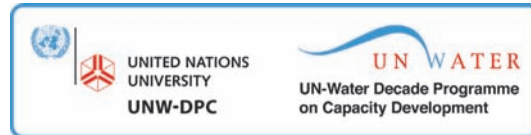
Copyright 2009

Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)

UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development UNW-DPC



United Nations



Printed by WECF – Women in Europe for a Common Future WECF, [www.wecf.eu](http://www.wecf.eu)  
with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Expert Group Meeting Report

# Gender-Disaggregated Data on Water and Sanitation

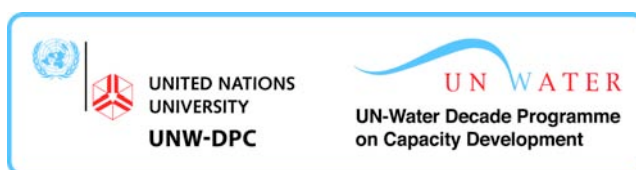
United Nations Headquarters  
New York  
2-3 December 2008

## Organization

Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and  
UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC)



United Nations



# **CONTENTS**

**4** | Rationale and Goals

**6** | Participation and Presentations

**8** | Summary of Overarching Themes

**11** | Obstacles to developing, collecting and using  
gender-disaggregated data on water & sanitation

**15** | Data collection needs: gender-disaggregated  
indicators currently unrepresented or under-represented

**17** | Summary Indicator Table

**19** | Recommendations

**21** | Annex: List of participants

---

# 1 | Rationale and Goals

Gender considerations are at the heart of providing, managing and conserving the world's water resources as well as for safeguarding public health and private dignity through proper provision of sanitation and hygiene. The central role of women in water resource management and sanitation, especially in developing countries, is increasingly recognized at all levels of development activity.

In most countries, women are, *in fact*, the primary stakeholders in the water and sanitation sectors, and are the primary providers of water for domestic consumption. They are also responsible for health, hygiene, sanitation and other productive activities at the household level. Lack of access to water and sanitation directly affects women's health, education, employment, income and empowerment. The gendered dynamics of water and sanitation underscore the close inter-linkages between poverty, gender and sustainable development.

***So far the global commitments in the area of water and sanitation do not address gender differences***

The issue of sanitation received global recognition and concrete commitments for the first time in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. There, governments agreed to a specific target to cut in half the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015. This complemented the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on safe drinking water. At the same time, these commitments highlighted the role of sanitation in improving human health, in reducing infant and child mortality, and improving the situation of women in terms of their dignity and security.

So far, global commitments made in the areas of water and sanitation, (including the MDG goals) do not specifically address the equitable division of power, work, access to and control of resources between women and men. The current system to assess global progress towards reaching the MDGs, through the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), until recently did not have any gender indicator for the water and sanitation goals; one gender-specific indicator has now been added. This slight representation underscores how critical it is to better mainstream gender perspectives into national and global water and sanitation (WATSAN) planning and monitoring processes to ensure that the different needs of women and men are understood, and that the specific needs and concerns of women are taken into account.

At the level of policy formation, there is no shortage of rhetorical support for gender inclusion by official agencies and governments. Almost all of the key global frameworks and action plans on water and sanitation include gender considerations in their overall field of vision. Most 'calls for action' or recommendations include some commitment to gender inclusion. More broadly, mandates for gender inclusion and gender equity frame almost all the key multilateral agreements to which most of the

world's governments are party, from CEDAW to Beijing to the MDG commitments. However, this has not produced tangible improvements in gender equity in the water and sanitation sectors.

This lack of progress is due in part to the stark absence of gender disaggregated WATSAN data. Without gender-disaggregated data, it is not possible to fully measure progress towards MDG or other goals. Without data, it is difficult to make effective analytical assessments of the comparative situation of women and men in different communities or parts of the world. Sound policy formulation is hampered by the lack of information about the gendered realities of water and sanitation access, need and use in private and public sectors. Gender-disaggregated data are essential to assess the effects of policy measures on women and men. Data are essential to be able to evaluate and track the pivotal role of women in development and to apprehend the specific contributions of women as a "Major Group" in society (as detailed in Agenda 21).

***Sound policy formulation is hampered by the lack of differentiated qualitative information***

Against this background of pressing data needs, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) convened an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in December 2008 with several goals in view:

- At a macro level, this initiative was intended to support efforts to enhance gender equity in the water and sanitation sectors within the prevailing framework of the MDGs. While gender has been contemplated from many perspectives, attention to gender disaggregated *data* has been largely missing. A central goal of the EGM was to draw attention to this issue, and to frame new approaches to it.
- The overarching purpose of focusing on data is to contribute to goals of poverty eradication and gender equity through ensuring that women's full and equal participation in all aspects of water and sanitation sectors is taken into account. The challenge and added value of this meeting was to explore ways to bridge the gap between conceptual or theoretical comprehensions of gender issues and everyday grassroots realities of differential access to and use of water and sanitation.
- In terms of assessing the state of global gender-disaggregated data, the meeting had several specific goals, to:
  - take stock of the state of gender-disaggregated data on water and sanitation at global and regional levels;
  - identify obstacles to gender-disaggregated data capacity/ collection; to identify data needs/ priorities;
  - make recommendations on policies, practices, and priorities to improve the state of gender-disaggregated data;
  - weigh the adequacy of current data collection regimes for capturing the gendered dimensions of water and sanitation;

- 
- assess the nature of changes in the use and collection of data that might be necessary to support a gender-informed water and sanitation agenda.

A group of more than 20 gender, water, sanitation, and data experts was convened (see participants list, Annex). The participants included scholars, policy-makers and project specialists from a range of backgrounds across development work, grassroots organizing, academia, governmental and NGO sectors; collectively, they brought decades of experience in these intersecting fields. Participants came from Chile, Sri Lanka, India, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Mexico, Suriname, Peru, UK, Netherlands, Germany, and Canada and represented several international organizations and institutions including UNDESA, UNICEF- JMP, the World Bank, UNIFEM, Overseas Development Institute, the Gender and Water Alliance, Water Aid, IRC, UNDP, Women for Water Partnership, Women in Europe for a Common Future, and UNW-DPC.

## 2 | Participation and Presentations

The EGM proceeded through two days of working sessions, presentations, and structured examinations of core issues.

**Mr Tariq Banuri**, Director of the Division of Sustainable Development of the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, **Ms Charlotte van der Schaaf**, UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC), and **Ms Kenza Kaouakib-Robinson**, UNDESA Senior Sustainable Development Officer and Chair of the UN Water and Gender Task Force, convened the EGM with welcoming remarks and observations about the importance of taking gender into account in all WATSAN activities. Mr Banuri highlighted the particular importance of two issues: access of women and men to water and sanitation, and their equal participation in decision-making bodies and emphasized that without gender-disaggregated data it will be problematic to measure the real impact of water and sanitation programs and projects. Ms van der Schaaf underlined the importance of developing the capacity of institutions for collecting and monitoring gendered data for mainstreaming gender into water supply and sanitation programs and projects. Ms Robinson highlighted the role of the UN Water and Gender Taskforce in monitoring progress and visibility of these issues.



*Participants of the Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Water, United Nations, December 2008*

Ms Joni Seager, gender expert, **Ms Sascha Gabizon from Women in Europe for a Common Future – WECF** and **Mr Rolf Luyendijk from UNICEF** offered overview presentations on the state of gender-disaggregated data in international data collection and monitoring systems and programs and addressed the challenges of data collection within the Joint Monitoring Program. Subsequently, the participants discussed regional differences in the collection of gender-disaggregated data on water and sanitation. The shared conclusion was that in most regions scarcely any data disaggregated by gender are collected, and the problem is especially acute in Asia and Africa.

**Ms Christine Sijbesma from IRC** (International Resource Center), Ms Siegmen Staphorst representing the National Women’s Movement in Suriname, **Ms Lakech Haile from the Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources** and **Ms Carolyn Sachs FAO** consultant and agricultural specialist presented assessments of the challenges, failures, best practices, and lessons learned from specific projects involving the development of gender-disaggregated WATSAN data.

During working group sessions, a comprehensive list of obstacles to collecting gender-disaggregated data on water and sanitation was developed, and in successive sessions participants discussed priorities for data and developed a common list of core data needs. Presentations by **Ms Nicola Jones** (Overseas Development Institute), **Ms Joke Muylwijk** (Gender & Water Alliance), **Ms Hortencia Uribe** (National Institute of Geography Statistics and Information, Mexico) and **Mr Francois Brikke** (the World Bank) focused on “ways ahead” and future directions for work on gender-disaggregated data. **Mr Henk van Norden** (UNICEF) moderated a discussion on key institutional interventions needed. The EGM concluded with a consensus on a slate of Recommendations.

---

### 3 | Summary of Overarching Themes

The two-day meeting drew out several overarching themes:

**There are strong rhetorical and written policy commitments** to taking gender into account throughout the water and sanitation sector; however, the available data and data-collection efforts are not commensurate with these commitments, especially at the large-scale or global level.

**Neither the quality nor the type of data currently collected are adequate to the task of supporting gender MDG (or other) goals in water and sanitation.** In particular, using “the household” as the main unit of analysis, as most global surveys do, hinders gendered analysis by obscuring intra-household gender dynamics. Moreover, for the poorest people of the world, water and sanitation are not available within the physical or social confines of the “household.”

*Moreover, for the poorest people of the world, water and sanitation are not available within the physical or social confines of the “household.”*

**Overall, more attention is paid to and more data are available for the water sector than for sanitation.** In turn, more attention is paid to household and drinking water than to the water sector in agriculture. The sole gendered data point currently available on a large scale is on which member(s) of the household has primary responsibility for water collection: male or female, adult or child. This question is now incorporated into the household surveys on which the Joint Monitoring Project reports are based. The JMP team has considered a range of other gendered questions, but concluded that none are practicable to incorporate into their surveys.

**The measure of progress most used in the sanitation sector is the presence of a toilet.** Questions about issues such as excreta collection and disposal, personal safety in access to sanitation facilities, gendered intra-household differences in access and use of facilities are seldom addressed and almost never at a policy level. But, work in the sanitation sector demonstrates that starting from “presence/absence” information (e.g., “is a toilet facility present?”) is an inadequate indicator of *actual* facility availability and use. In this sector, qualitative assessments on the state of maintenance and hygiene of facilities must be taken into account to get a clearer picture of access and use; in this case, threshold indicators need to be developed on whether sanitary facilities are “safe and appropriate.”

**The quantity and quality of gender-disaggregated data on smaller scales is considerably better than at the global scale,** and is available for a wide range of topics – including actual water use and priorities for use within households, women’s participation in formal decision-making and policy-setting institutional structures, girls’ access to sanitary facilities at school, and links between water collection and sanitation access and transportation, among other topics.

**The smaller scale may often be the most appropriate and fruitful.**

Data on local and small-scale interventions (and their outcome and impact) with respect to gender provide a concrete knowledge base on the effectiveness of WATSAN interventions. Local data not only provide the basis of most of the knowledge that we have on gender in water and sanitation, but small-scale efforts can inform and validate survey methods and techniques that then may be applied at a larger scale. In order to inform policy and increase capacity at the local or regional level, it is not necessarily desirable to emphasize the collection of globally-uniform data. However, “translating” between scales or integrating data collected on varying scales is very complex and needs further attention and methodological work.

***Ranked-qualitative scales can be developed to assess the quality of women’s participation in decision-making bodies***

**NGOs and small community-based groups are essential partners in identifying and developing indicators** that will most productively draw out the gendered realities of water and sanitation, and NGOs and grassroots groups are also the most likely to succeed at assembling information about gender and water and sanitation. This knowledge is seldom tapped by large data-collecting agencies.

**Sharing information amongst networks is critically important;** however it is a challenge to do so when so many actors, many operating on a very local scale, are involved in collecting and analyzing data.

**In establishing priorities for data collection, it is possible and important to distinguish between what is ‘nice to know’ and what is ‘necessary to know.’** Simply increasing the quantity of data available, without rooting this in a gendered understanding of priorities, would not be a sound use of resources. Additionally, the method of collecting any data needs to be carefully scrutinized for gender bias, including, importantly the sex profile of who are the interviewers and respondents.

**The emphasis on demonstrating national progress in WATSAN sectors against global “targets” (such as MDG goals) often works against real progress in this sector.** For example, governments may be encouraged to inflate reports of progress, or may reduce “progress” to simple quantitative measures.

**The search for data and indicators should be guided by a concern for representing the realities of women’s and men’s lives – as they are experienced.** Information about these kinds of socio-economic processes is often best elicited through qualitative approaches, even if the data so gathered is then rendered into some quantitative form. The criteria used in technical surveys are not adequate to represent socioeconomic processes.

**There is a need to challenge the perception that qualitative data are anecdotal or *ad hoc*.** Small-scale qualitative information is essential; it often provides the best information about problems (or solutions) which then might be followed up with larger-scale inquiry. Further, qualitative information can be systematized, collected on a ranked scale, and

---

quantified to facilitate cross-case comparisons. Techniques to do so have already been developed and are proving their value; for example, ranked-qualitative scales can be developed to assess the quality of women's participation in decision-making bodies (rather than simply looking at the presence of women in such a group).

**Both the water and sanitation sectors are dominated by engineering and infrastructure frameworks.** The 'problem' of water and sanitation is often reduced to one of engineering.

**"Second-effect" indicators may be particularly useful in filling out a gender-sensitive view of the implications of limited quality of water and sanitation.** For example, indicators of the quality of drinking water and the hygiene levels of sanitation can point to labor burdens that fall to women; if people fall ill from polluted water, it is women who are responsible for looking after them. It is possible that the time spent by women on family members ill from bad water and sanitation might, worldwide, be much higher than time spent on gathering water, which is now a worldwide indicator.

**To establish an effective gender-disaggregated data regime will require new indicators, new approaches, and new capacity-building.** However, a lot of progress could be made by incorporating gender and water/ sanitation indicators/ questions into existing capacities, surveys, measurements and approaches. For example:

- UNDP could incorporate WATSAN as one component of its composite gender indices, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM); a relatively easy entry point would be to incorporate into these indices statistics on women in governmental decision-making bodies on water and sanitation;
- UNICEF and UNESCO are well placed to collect gender-specific data on school sanitation;
- UNIFEM could incorporate water into their time-use studies.

**Accountability is missing at all levels.** Given sufficient political will, for example, projects could be halted if women's participation is absent or if no gendered information is available. Responsibility for reporting on improved gender equity using rigorous gender-disaggregated data could be embedded in senior manager job descriptions.

**Incentives for governments/organizations could be used to encourage them to prioritize gender-disaggregation.** International multilateral research donors' criteria for research funding could be shifted to support greater gender-disaggregated data in all areas and capacity building for collection and analysis.

## 4 | Obstacles to developing, collecting and using gender-disaggregated data on water & sanitation

The meeting devoted a session to identifying key obstacles and roadblocks to developing, collecting, and using gender-disaggregated data on water and sanitation. It identified problems in the structure of institutional culture, societal discrimination, in the dominant conceptualization and framework of WATSAN, in the “location” (conceptual and otherwise) of gender issues, in methodologies of data, and in the extent and seriousness of commitments and accountability.

### ***Broad social/ cultural and institutional obstacles:***

- Within institutions, as in society at large, there is often active resistance to an agenda that takes gender seriously.
- Gender issues are often seen as (and usually are) a challenge to ‘business as usual’; in all institutions, there are vested interests in *not* challenging/ changing power relations. To overcome obstacles, power relations inside (and outside) institutions often need to be directly challenged – and this may not be acceptable or allowable. Gender awareness also challenges the *status quo* of gender relations in societies and cultures; gender change in broad social relations is usually seen as threatening and is often deeply resisted.
- Many institutions, often reflecting larger social values, incorporate discriminatory attitudes toward women and “women’s issues”; these may be trivialized, demeaned, or dismissed as less important, entirely unimportant, or distracting from “main” agenda.



Ms Kenza Kaouakib-Robinson, UN-DESA,  
Mr van Norden, UNICEF at the Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Water

- Gender demands are often seen as competing for scarce resources (at the project level, at agency levels, within NGOs, at national levels).
- Project-based commitments to “community participation” often eclipse or are substituted for women’s participation.
- Institutional commitments are often ‘window dressing’ or lip service. Good rhetoric is seldom matched by real commitments – by governments UN agencies, academia, NGOs, and community groups.
- It is necessary to distinguish “knowledge” from “understanding.” Understanding comes from a steeping in the issues, and there is very little commitment to developing this degree of familiarity with gender/ WATSAN issues.
- Key policy-makers are seldom mentored on gender issues; without mentoring it is difficult for them to build personal conviction and commitment. Personal commitment often drives policy. Success in gender awareness often depends on finding and convincing the ‘right people’ that gender issues are important.
- Within institutions, gender training is typically given short shrift. In most groups working on WATSAN issues, limited gender training is available; there is often the assumption that a one-day training on gender is sufficient.
- Despite the presence of “gender focal points” in many agencies and institutions, the focal point is often ill-equipped and not given sufficient resources.
- Institutional culture may not encourage (or may actively discourage) gender issues from being raised/ taken seriously – thus even if an individual is trained, sensitized, and eager to incorporate gender issues, s/he may not feel free to do so – or may be working within a broader cultural context in which this is not encouraged or accepted. Additionally, women, who might be the ones to raise gender issues, are often not empowered to do so.
- Women are often excluded from decision-making/ policy-making venues and positions of authority where they might be able to advocate.

***Key policy-makers are seldom mentored on gender issues; without mentoring it is difficult for them to build personal conviction and commitment.***

***Lack of institutional commitment/ accountability:***

- In most agencies, there is little incentive (in any terms) to encourage agencies/ individuals/ organizations to take gender seriously and to collect gender disaggregated information. Donor funding could play a key role.
- Despite supportive rhetoric, in most institutions and projects there is virtually no accountability for follow-through; typically, there are no sanctions for *not* improving gender capacity.
- Turnover in governments and leadership within agencies means that the political will and commitment to gender agendas often changes. Often successes or commitments to things such as collecting gender disaggregated data are specific to individual managers/ leaders and if they leave so does the gender agenda.

- The United Nations could take the lead in accountability with incentives. There is a critical need for a lead agency on gender at the UN – UNIFEM does not have the clout or resources it would need to play this role.
- Within the UN, there is no leader in gender data initiatives.
- Reporting formats typically don't require gender analysis, thus it is easy to ignore gender. Governments should develop and insist on gender-disaggregated data guidelines, and the UN should hold governments accountable to do so.

***Problems characteristic of WATSAN sectors:***

- Water and sanitation are seen to be “gender-neutral” and common resources, and thus it is especially difficult for many participants within WATSAN to understand why one would need to consider gender.
- There is a general lack of awareness of the importance of gender-disaggregated data across participants -- from community groups to NGOs to governmental agencies. The basic “why” of collecting gender disaggregated data is often not appreciated nor understood. The “added value” and importance of infusing WATSAN approaches with gender perspectives does not inform general understanding. To the extent that there is an interest in gender disaggregated data, this is typically seen as an appendage, never as the main issue.
- The water/ sanitation sector is dominated by technical/ technological/ infrastructure/ engineering and biophysical perspectives, not social. Because of this sectoral bias, this is a largely male-populated and male-identified field. There are few women technicians, statisticians, policy makers, or leaders in these sectors.
- Water service providers, who typically have closely calibrated data collection capacities, typically don't evaluate or collect social or gender-informed data.
- Water and sanitation experts are often isolated from other experts, other perspectives, and new paradigms. Because of the technical and technological tendency of this sector, WATSAN experts are often especially isolated from people doing social analysis. This points to a need to engage in multidisciplinary education/ conversation at all levels, of all types, across WATSAN sectors.
- For those people who *are* doing gender work in relations to WATSAN, gender there is usually no “place” (literal or otherwise) to share information or to learn from one another. This is particularly stark in the context of disasters and the intersection of gender, water, sanitation and disaster. Groups and individuals who work in these areas typically do their work in isolation. Among other things, this blocks the possibility of learning from the lessons of other groups and people.

***Data collection and methodology:***

- Because of the hierarchy and centralization of statistics-gathering, the same data are collected over and over. It is often very difficult and costly to change data collection systems. Gender needs to be embedded within them from first place.

- 
- Neither the quality nor the *type* of data currently collected are adequate to the task of supporting gender MDG (or other) goals in water and sanitation.
  - In terms of the gendered relations of WATSAN, considerable local/ regional data is produced. These data are typically unavailable or unknown outside the small group that collected it. Consultants, academics, NGOs often produce reports that may not get disseminated. The information channels from local groups to larger agencies are not open, and, further, there are challenges for locally-based groups to communicate with one another. This points to the need for clearinghouse mechanisms, but also points to the need for large data agencies to incorporate grassroots participants and locally-based experts (and gender experts) into their data collection and preparation mechanisms.
  - At the highest levels, governments, NGOs, and international organizations, all of whom might be collecting such data, do not coordinate their efforts. Likewise, inter-sectoral linkages are weak between educational systems, health systems, and social welfare systems, all of which collect some data on water and sanitation.
  - Gender experts often know little about water and sanitation, just as WATSAN experts know little about gender. Gender databases often entirely ignore WATSAN issues, just as WATSAN databases often entirely ignore gender. Better coordination and cooperation – and mutual appreciation – must be cultivated among agencies and experts representing different approaches.
  - There are considerable complications of scale: data collected at a meta- or global scales often mask local diversities; although large-scale data collection agencies typically have the best data collecting capacity, it is not always productive to collect at large scale. Often it is preferable to collect at local/ small scale. However, while good data may exist at the local scale, it is hard to “scale up” or draw generalizations from local examples/ cases. It is methodologically challenging to manage and integrate myriad local-scale datapoints.



*Participants of the Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Water*

- The prevailing emphasis on demonstrating national progress in WATSAN sectors against global “targets” (such as MDG goals) often works against real progress in this sector. Governments may be encouraged to inflate reports of progress, or may reduce “progress” to simple quantitative measures.
- Because of the conceptual framework of WATSAN as a technical rather than social field, there is an erroneous, although widespread, perception that qualitative data are less serious, less reliable, anecdotal or *ad hoc*.
- It is a challenge to integrate qualitative and quantitative data, but techniques to do so have already been developed and are proving their value. For example, ranked-qualitative scales can be developed to assess the quality and nature of women’s participation in decision-making (rather than simply looking at the “yes/no” presence of women in such a group); similarly, ranked scales can assess the nature and hygiene of sanitation facilities, rather than a focus simply on the presence of a facility. Gender scholars are at the forefront of developing such techniques.
- Because qualitative data are likely to foreground nuance and complexity (rather than simple yes/ no data), policy makers and decision leaders often have a hard time knowing how to deploy it. Qualitative data *can* guide decision-making, but it typically needs to be translated into short components to perform this function. Policy makers are often ill-equipped to make this translation.
- The logistics of collecting gender data are challenging, but perhaps not more so than collecting any data. There are constraints of survey methodology: questions cannot be too long or complex, and cannot make surveys as a whole too long or complex or cumbersome. However, in terms of gender information, the realities of data collection need particular scrutiny, including the gendered dynamics of interviewers and interviewees.

## 5 | Data collection needs: gender-disaggregated indicators currently unrepresented or under-represented

The meeting devoted a session to identifying specific information about gender and water/ sanitation in need of more attention, emphasis, and that should be incorporated into data collection activities. The expert group generated a list of minimal “need to know” information for which gender disaggregated data is currently mostly absent or significantly incomplete.

Data collection efforts to fill these gaps are needed on a pressing basis:

- *Basic parameters of gender and water/ sanitation use:* Data are not typically available on things such as:

- 
- the use of water *within* households (and whether for productive and reproductive needs);
  - gender-specific water/ sanitation priorities (public surveys as well as within households);
  - relationships between gender and modes of transportation in water collecting;
  - gender differences in access to safe and clean water, measured by indicators of the appropriateness of water/ sanitation supplies;
  - women's and men's views of the safety of the path/ road/ access to water supplies or sanitation facilities;
  - documentation of violence against women/ girls in the context of water collecting or using sanitary facilities;
  - information on the disposal of fecal wastes, at the household level and in public sectors, and the gendered workforce responsible for disposal of wastes, especially in urban areas.
- *Time*: Data are needed on access to water, by distance, and by the *time* needed to collect water to meet daily basic needs; “time needed” includes waiting time. The time spent on collecting water is an essential equity issue: women are still over-burdened; time spent in these activities diminishes time available for other activities, and takes away from women's and girls capacity to participate in productive labor and in civic opportunities including school attendance.
- *Decision making and policy*: There is a dearth of information on decision-making at local through national levels on projects and issues related to water/ sanitation. Any number of measures of the participation of women in water/ sanitation sectors, including international policy formulation, could be deployed, including:
- the roles of women in communities or organisations in safeguarding access to water and sanitation supplies
  - whether women's participation in formal settings reaches the critical mass threshold of 30%
  - the participation of women in the advance planning stages of projects, not just at the implementation stage
  - the extent to which women's participation is volunteer labour, or, if compensated, whether on equal terms with men
  - information on water and sanitation decision-making within households; even in female headed households, the primary decision-makers might not be the women, but the owners of the house (if different)
- *Costs and benefits*: Information is lacking on the economic benefit to men and women from improved access to water, or the differential costs to men and women of lack of access. Similarly, little attention is directed to understanding the gendered dimensions of costs and benefits from privatization of water and sanitation.
- *Private income and expenditures*: Are there differences between female and male- headed households in expenditures on water and sanitation?

- *Public expenditures:* The scale and nature of public sector expenditures on investments for water, and the gender-differentiated impacts of those expenditures, are usually not tallied. For example, it is rare to have information on whether expenditures are directed towards hardware/software, hygiene and sanitation promotion, in rural and urban areas, how funds are distributed across communities, and the extent of funding directed to maintaining sustainability of services. The extent to which public funding is directed to women’s groups working on water and sanitation is largely overlooked.
- *Public and school-based water and sanitation:* Sanitation is not just a household matter; basic information is lacking on the nature of/ state of sanitation provision in public places and especially the extent to which public/ private provision is made for women’s/ girls’ menstrual needs. Data on the prevalence of open defecation on water and land by male/ female, girls/ boys are needed. Data are largely not collected on the presence/absence of public and school facilities, but more importantly, ranked indicators of conditions, availability, and quality are needed. Data needs to be collected on toilets at school and on what is counted as a school toilet; if toilets are not designed to serve girls, they should not be counted (“serving girls” adequately would include having sex-segregated toilets, adequate provision for sanitary supplies and disposal, toilets that allow privacy, that are at an appropriate distance from the school building for girls).
- *Health, Sanitation:* Much health data already are disaggregated by gender, but not necessarily then linked to water/ sanitation.
- *Survey Methodology:* Most surveys on water and sanitation do not provide gendered information on who is interviewing/ being interviewed.

## 6 | Summary Indicator Table

The following table gives a summary of data collection needs, indicators and methodologies proposed.

<i>Gender and water/ sanitation use</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of water <i>within</i> households (productive/ reproductive uses)</li> <li>• gender-specific water/ sanitation priorities</li> <li>• gender and modes of transportation in water collecting</li> <li>• gender differences in access to safe and clean water</li> <li>• gendered views of the safety of access to water supplies or sanitation facilities;</li> <li>• violence against women/ girls in the context of water collecting or using sanitary facilities;</li> <li>• the disposal of fecal wastes, at the household level and in public sectors</li> <li>• the gendered workforce responsible for disposal of wastes in urban areas</li> </ul>
---	---

<i>Time Use</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• total time expended by men and women (and boys / girls) in collecting water to meet daily basic needs, including waiting time at public supply points</li> </ul>
<i>Decision making and policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roles played and efforts expended by women in safeguarding the water and sanitation access</li> <li>• proportional women's/ men's participation in formal settings</li> <li>• participation of women throughout complete project cycles</li> <li>• compensation levels for men and women</li> <li>• decision-making power and processes within households</li> </ul>
<i>Costs &amp; benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gendered economic benefits from improved access to water; the differential costs to men and women of lack of access.</li> <li>• gendered dimensions of costs and benefits from privatization of water and sanitation</li> <li>• f/m-headed household expenditures on water and sanitation</li> </ul>
<i>Public expenditures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scale and nature of public sector expenditures on investments for water, and the gender-differentiated impacts of those expenditures,</li> <li>• information on expenditure allocations (hardware/software, hygiene and sanitation promotion, in rural and urban areas, how funds are distributed across communities, the extent of funding directed to maintaining sustainability of services).</li> <li>• public funding is directed to women's groups working on water and sanitation is largely overlooked.</li> </ul>
<i>Public and school-based water and sanitation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nature of/ state of sanitation provision in public places</li> <li>• extent of public/ private provision for women's/ girls' menstrual needs</li> <li>• prevalence of open defecation on water and land by male/ female, girls/ boys</li> <li>• presence/absence of public and school facilities, and ranked indicators of conditions, availability, and quality of those services</li> </ul>
<i>Health, Sanitation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public health data linked to/ collected for WATSAN sector</li> </ul>
<i>Survey Methodology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sex of interviewers/ respondents</li> </ul>

## 7 | Recommendations

1) Governments and multilateral donors should support further initiatives to extend efforts to reframe the mechanisms, approaches, and paradigms of gender-disaggregated data collection in the WATSAN sectors, and to develop specific frameworks and methodologies for their implementation, taking into account the needs and obstacles identified through this EGM process. Such initiatives must involve grassroots participants as well as policy-makers, and must incorporate lessons from successful local and small-scale efforts that document the complex range and nature of gendered relationships to water and sanitation.

2) While this foundational revisionary work is underway, and as a parallel step, *existing* data mechanisms at local, national and global levels should be improved and deployed to incorporate consideration of gender-disaggregated water and sanitation issues.

For example:

- The UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) could incorporate questions on gendered participation into their existing reports on WATSAN capacities;
- UNDP could incorporate WATSAN as one component of its composite gender indices (the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)); a relatively easy entry point would be to incorporate into these indices statistics on women in governmental decision-making bodies on water and sanitation;
- UNICEF and UNESCO are well placed to collect gender-specific data on school sanitation;
- UNIFEM could incorporate water into their time-use studies.



Sascha Gabizon, WECF, Christine Sijbesma, IRC and Bilqis Hoque, EPRC  
(from left to right)

---

As a general recommendation, current data collecting instruments and approaches should be diversified not only along gender lines but also to collect data disaggregated by social strata, class, age, and other key social variables.

3) As a first priority, six gendered indicators on water and sanitation should be incorporated into existing surveys and data collection efforts of governments and of key global-level data collection entities including JMP/GLAAS, UNDP, the World Bank, and UNIFEM, among others on:

- the adequacy and availability of water at the household level for daily needs, distinguishing between reproductive and productive activities of men and women;
- the time spent, by sex, to collect water, further distinguishing between that work done by adults and children (and collected by urban/rural);
- relationships between transportation and gender in collecting water, with particular care taken to distinguish between “carrying” vs “assisted transport” (whether animal or mechanized);
- what kind of sanitation facilities (if any) are *actually* used by men and by women and on who are not using facilities, and why; these data should be further disaggregated by income and by urban/rural setting;
- women’s participation in decision-making processes regarding water and sanitation at all levels, including careful attention to indicators (such as qualitative ordinal scales) that reveal the nature and quality of women’s inclusion in decision making;
- sanitation at schools, including specific information on whether facilities are provided separately for males and females, the extent to which existing facilities are *actually used* by male and female schoolchildren, and the extent to which those facilities meet the specific needs of girls in terms of safety, privacy, proximity, hygiene, cleanliness, water, and provision for menstruation.

These new data initiatives could be undertaken by NGOs, and at the local level; they need not only be developed by the large multinational organizations. However, to the extent that large data collecting agencies do take on this agenda, they should engage grassroots participants, gender specialists, and activists as equal collaborators in drafting the specific questions and defining the approaches (including, as appropriate, the specific survey instruments) that they will deploy in these efforts.

4) Donor support should be directed to governments and agencies, including NGOs and groups operating at the local level, that are willing to take the first steps to engage with and pilot these data collections.

5) Institutional constraints that inhibit the collection of gender-disaggregated water and sanitation data should be identified, monitored, and action plans developed to remedy these problems and develop capacities.

6) The UN Statistical Commissions should take the consideration and proposed indicators of this EGM into its deliberations

## **ANNEX: List of Participants**

### **1. Ms. Maria-Angelica ALEGRIA CALVO**

Chief Engineer, National Initiative of Water Efficiency

Chilean General Directorate of Water

Steering Committee Member of the Gender & Water Alliance

Estado No. 10, Oficina 1501

8320000, Santiago, Chile

Tel: +56 2 6398941

Email: maria.alegria@mop.gov.cl; mariaangelica.alegria@gmail.com

### **2. Ms. Kusum ATHUKORALA**

Chair, NetWater, Rural Development, Gender,

Water & Sanitation, NETWATER

Rural Development, Gender, Water & Sanitation

No.7, St. Mary's Lane

Colombo 15, Sri Lanka

Tel/Fax: 0094-2521604

Email: kusum@itmin.net; kusumathukorala@hotmail.com

### **3. Mr. Tariq BANURI**

Director, Division for Sustainable Development

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DC2-2220

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 212-963-8416

Email: banuri@un.org

### **4. Ms. Alice BOUMAN-DENTENER**

President, Women for Water Partnership

Benoordent Houtse Weg 23, 2596 BA, The Hague,

Holland

Tel: 31-70-326-41-76

Email: chair@womenforwater.org; secretariat@womenforwater.org

### **5. Mr. François BRIKKE**

Regional Leader for Latin America

Water & Sanitation Program, The World Bank

185, Avenida Alvarez Calderon

San Isidro, Lima, Peru

Tel: +51-1-615 0685

Mobil: +51-1-997-59-50-59

Email: fbrikke@worldbank.org

---

**6. Mr. Muhammad Aslam CHAUDHRY**  
Chief, Water, Natural Resources and Small Island  
Developing States Branch  
Division for Sustainable Development, DESA  
DC2-2270, New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-963-8558  
Email: [chaudhry@un.org](mailto:chaudhry@un.org)

**7. Mr. Jean-Michel CHENE**  
Interregional Adviser on Water and Sanitation  
Water, Natural Resources and SIDS Branch  
Division for Sustainable Development, DESA  
DC2-2234, New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-963-8575  
Email: [chenej@un.org](mailto:chenej@un.org)

**8. Mr. Kumar Bar DAS**  
Prof. of Applied Economics & President, The Humanity  
A-7, Utkal University Campus, Bhubaneswar,  
Orissa, India 751004  
Tel: 0674-2586774/ 9437144375  
Email: [drkumardas@gmail.com](mailto:drkumardas@gmail.com)

**9. Ms. Yassine FALL**  
Senior Economic Adviser, UNIFEM  
405 Lexington Ave., Room 2602  
New York, NY 10174  
Tel: 212-907-6457  
Mobile: 917-488-1133  
Email: [susanne.schmidt@undp.org](mailto:susanne.schmidt@undp.org); [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

**10. Ms. Sascha GABIZON**  
Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)  
Biltstraat 445  
NL-3572 Utrecht, the Netherlands  
Tel: +31-30-2310300  
Email: [sascha.gabizon@wecf.eu](mailto:sascha.gabizon@wecf.eu)

**11. Ms. Lakech HAILE**  
Head, Women's Affairs Department  
Ministry of Water Resources  
Haile Gebreselasse Road  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: +251-91-1194094(mobile)  
Email: [lakech\\_haile@yahoo.com](mailto:lakech_haile@yahoo.com)

**12. Ms. Bilqis Amin HOQUE**  
Environment & Population Research Centre  
House 242 , Road 17, New DOHS, Mohakhali  
Dhaka 1206, Bangladesh  
Tel: +880 2-1711594911, 880-2-8822772  
Email: [bilqisdhaka@yahoo.com](mailto:bilqisdhaka@yahoo.com); [eprc@bol-online.com](mailto:eprc@bol-online.com)

**13. Ms. Nicola JONES**

Research Fellow, Gender and Social Development/Knowledge, Power  
and Policy, Overseas Development Institute  
111 Westminster Bridge Road  
London, SE1 7JD, United Kingdom  
Tel: 44-20-79220300  
Email: n.jones@odi.org.uk

**14. Mr. Rolf LUYENDIJK**

Senior. Statistics and Monitoring Specialist Water & Sanitation  
UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, UNICEF House  
New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-303-7975  
Email: rluyendijk@unicef.org

**15. Ms. Hortencia MEDINA URIBE**

Sub-Director of Research & Environmental Studies  
National Institute of Geography Statistics & Information (INEGI)  
Av. Hèroe de Nacozari, Num 230 Sur, Acceso 11  
Primer Nivel, Fracc. Jardines del Parque  
Aguascalientes, Mexico, CP 20270  
Tel: 52 (449) 9-10-54-37  
Email: hortencia.medina@inegi.org.mx

**16. Ms. Joke MUYLWIJK**

Executive Director, GWA  
Gender and Water Alliance, P.O. Box 114  
6950 AC Dieren, Netherlands  
Tel: 31-313-427230  
Email: jokemuylwijk@gwalliance.org

**17. Ms. Sarina PRABASI**

Country Representative, WaterAid Ethiopia  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: +251-0-11-466-1680  
Direct: +251-0-11-466-1865  
Email: sarinap@wateraidet.org, www.wateraidethiopia.org

**18. Ms. Kenza KAOUAKIB-ROBINSON**

Senior Sustainable Development Officer/  
Chair UN Water and Gender Task Force  
2 UN Plaza  
Water, Natural Resources & SIDS Branch  
Division for Sustainable Development  
DESA, DC2-2242  
New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-963-8559  
Fax: 917-367-3391  
Email: robinson1@un.org

---

**19. Ms. Carolyn SACHS**

Professor of Rural Sociology & Women's Studies,  
Pennsylvania State University, Dept. of Agricultural Economics & Rural  
Sociology  
111 Armsby Building  
University Park, PA 16801  
Tel: 814-863-8641  
Email: csachs@psu.edu

**20. Ms. Joni SEAGER**

Consultant for Gender-Disaggregated Data EGM  
Chair & Professor, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies  
Hunter College (CUNY), Room 1009-N, 695 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10021  
Email: jseager@hunter.cuny.edu

**21. Ms. Christine SIJBESMA**

International Water & Sanitation Centre, IRC  
Senior Programme Officer, IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre  
P.O. Box 82327, 2508 EH, The Hague, The Netherlands  
Tel: +31-70-3044011  
Fax: 31-70-3044044  
Email: sijbesma@irc.nl; www.irc.nl

**22. Ms. Siegmien STAPHORST**

Director, National Women's Movement  
National Women's Movement, Verl. Gemenelandsweg, 132-B  
Paramaribo, Suriname  
Tel: 597-465626/ 432921/ 8626804  
Email: siegmien@cq-link.sr

**23. Mr. Hendrik VAN NORDEN**

Senior Adviser, WASH  
UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, UNICEF House  
New York, NY 10017  
Tel: 212-303-7957  
Email: hvannorden@unicef.org

**24. Ms. Charlotte VAN DER SCHAAF**

Programme Officer, UNW-DPC, Hermann-Ehlers Str. 10  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Tel: +49-228-815-0661  
Email: vanderschaaf@unwater.unu.edu

United Nations publication  
Printed in Germany  
March 2009