

Water a human right



Human beings are at the centre of concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. Women have an essential role to play in development. Women have often played leadership roles or taken the lead in promoting an environmental ethic, reducing resource use, and re-using, and recycling resources to minimize waste and excessive consumption. (Platform for Action Beijing + 5)

Green women works to ensure opportunities for all women to participate in decisions about environment at all levels. To make decisions about water management is still largely in the hands of men all over the world. *Without taking gender and people's diversity into account, heavy investments in infrastructure becomes inefficient and don't reach their planned impact.*

All this must change NOW!

- **INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CHEMICALS** The cheapest and most resource efficient way to keep water clean is to look upstream, that is, to find out who pours what into the water and try to make them stop. It would be sensible for the United Nations to establish, without delay, an intergovernmental panel on chemicals, something that the organization has not yet done.
- **GOVERNMENTS RESPONSIBILITY** Governments should raise issues concerning climate change and water, and link progress in this domain to the participation of women in decision-making processes.
- **50/50 GENDER BALANCE** Green women advocate a 50/50 gender balance in all decision-making bodies.
- **GENDERBUDGETING** Furthermore, gender budgets should be used as an instrument for highlighting and redistributing resources in a genderbalanced way.
- **WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT**

Water is a prerequisite for life

However, only 3% of the water on Earth is fresh water, the remaining 97% being seawater. About 70% of the human body is made up of water, and every child is born in a flood of water coming from the uterus (amniotic fluid).

The resources of fresh water that can be used for human consumption are unevenly distributed around the globe. Some countries have large resources of water that can be purified through simple and inexpensive methods. In other countries, water purification is a costly process that requires advanced technology. In such cases, clean drinking water becomes too expensive for people with limited resources. In all countries, women generally have the lowest incomes.

Women, young and old, often have to walk long distances away to carry water. Taking care of children, elderly and other vulnerable persons who frequently get ill from polluted drinking water is generally a task for women.

The resources of fresh drinking water are mostly controlled by men, and controlling the water in turn makes it possible to rule over those who own nothing. Climate changes that bring more extreme weather conditions, increasing the difference between hot and cold periods, between wet and dry seasons, are already turning water into a scarce resource that is overused in some countries at the expense of others, resulting in conflicts and wars rather than cooperation.

Abrupt climate change requires great competence on the part of decision-makers. We know that in unstable societies, women and children are the ones who suffer most, are poorest and are the most frequent victims of violence and abuse.

***The distribution** of the power to make decisions is of great importance. In the decision-making processes concerning future infrastructure, women's experiences and knowledge is still not taken into account. Women's ecological footprints are significantly smaller than men's. If men would act more like women, we would have a better world to live in and to pass on to our children and grandchildren.*

Green women are a unique, politically independent and focusing on issues concerning gender equality, environment, climate and economy – everything is interconnected.

- We bring the global feminization of poverty into focus and point out how environmental degradation, exploitation, pauperization and patriarchal structures are linked together.
- We strive to highlight, from a gender perspective, the issue of water as an essential nutrient and a natural resource.
- We uncover the patriarchal structures behind current energy supply systems and emphasize the linkage between nuclear power and nuclear weapons.
- We highlight and struggle against men's violence against women as a critically important issue of equality.
- We work to promote the use of gender budgets at the local, regional and national levels. It is time to bring patriarchy to an end.
- **Green women want gender equality now!**

Green women cooperate with Gender Water Alliance, GWA



www.genderandwater.org



www.gronakvinnor.se