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Water, Sanit & Sett

— Afternoon Session

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**IPM CSD-13 on Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements**  
New York, 28 February to 4 March, 2005

**Speaking Points**

**Subject:** Mainstreaming gender in the management of water, sanitation and human settlements  
**Date and Time:** March 3; 15:00-18:00, Conference room 2  
**Responsible Person:** T. von Steiger

Mr. Chairperson

Switzerland will focus its intervention on the cross-cutting issue mainstreaming gender in the management of water, sanitation and human settlements.

To achieve gender equality and women empowerment it is crucial to be clear in the terminology used. Gender mainstreaming programmes and projects is but one strategy for reaching gender-equality. Other policies are necessary to guarantee women's rights such as gender specific actions and programmes, and strategies for engendering the organisations in terms of procedures, budgets, systems of evaluation, controlling and reporting etc.

Gender Mainstreaming means taking into account the perspectives, roles and responsibilities of both women and men in development initiatives. It involves integrating an understanding of gender in all departments, projects and processes rather than just designing projects to target women as an isolated group. This means exploring the gender issues in sectors such as infrastructure which may initially appear as if it affects all people equally irrespective of gender or any other difference.

Including a gender perspective into water resource and sanitation planning means being specific about the context in which the project will be based and understanding this context through detailed consultations and analyses. It also requires thinking about how women have different roles and different access to resources within communities (as will different men) and how gender roles and relations will change in accordance with new ways of using and managing water resources.

Such analysis for example have to look beyond the household as a given entity, i.e. look at the effect policy decisions taken at a higher level have in the end on the specific relations structuring the families, mainly also between men and women and between generations.

The delivery of water and sanitation services has a potential impact on gender power relations in a specific social context. This can make vulnerable groups more vulnerable through entrenching existing inequalities. An other area where special attention is required, is when water is given a market value. In such cases there is a danger that non-productive uses of water such as health and sanitation are not incorporated into such models which can then threaten their sustainability.

New ways of integrating a gender perspective into development interventions such as gender budgets and gender audits, employ the logic of gender mainstreaming in very practical ways.

These involve analysing budgetary allocations to establish who is benefiting from particular services.

Thank you Mr Chairperson