



Letter of Intent to Form the Gender in Water Partnership

Between

The Gender and Water Alliance of the International Water and Sanitation Center, and the Asian Development Bank

This letter affirms the intention to develop a partnership between the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), which is housed in the International Water and Sanitation Center, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to work together in promoting gender mainstreaming into ADB's developing member countries' (DMCs') water sector activities. The goal of the Gender in Water Partnership is achievement of universal access to safe water and sanitation for all. This partnership is designed to contribute towards the realization of this goal, with special emphasis on the needs of women

ADB's Board of Directors adopted a Policy on Gender and Development (GAD) in 1998 and its Water Policy in 2001. The Policy on GAD adopted mainstreaming as a key strategy for promoting gender equality. Key elements of GAD include (i) increased gender sensitivity for ADB operations; (ii) enhanced analysis for better understanding of gender impacts in the water sector; (iii) mainstreaming gender in all ADB operations; and (iv) agenda setting to assist DMCs develop strategies and actions to promote gender equality and reduce gender disparities. ADB's Water Policy promotes (i) a national focus on water sector reform; (ii) fosters integrated management of water resources; (iii) aims to improve and expand delivery of water services; (iv) facilitates the exchange of water sector information and experience; and (v) aims to improve governance. ADB's Water Policy states "To ensure that water sector activities are gender-responsive at policy and institutional levels, ADB will promote the integration of gender concerns in policy, plans, programs, and projects."


The mission of GWA is to "achieve equity and equality among women and men, irrespective of age, color, culture, religion, language or income in sustainable water resources development and management at all levels." Through its program of activities GWA assists and encourages governments to incorporate gender and equity practices into legislation, policies, and decision-making processes concerning design and management of water resources and systems. The guiding principles of GWA include (i) working strategically and collaboratively; (ii) working to strengthen the capacity and role of existing organizations for gender mainstreaming; and (iii) mobilizing other institutions to direct resources for gender mainstreaming.

Given the mutually supportive goals of ADB and GWA, the Gender in Water Partnership will catalyze implementation of ADB's GAD and Water Policy while also promoting the objectives of GWA. Areas for collaboration may include (i) capacity

development for gender in water for ADB staff and DMC stakeholders; (ii) development of strategies for DMCs to mainstream gender concerns into water resources management and water services; (iii) research and analysis to better understand gender dimensions in water sector activities; (iv) provision of recommendations to help promote and ensure gender considerations in ADB's water sector activities; (v) development of best practices and policy materials for water and gender; (vi) and facilitating regional and country dialogue on water and gender issues with ADB member countries. The Gender in Water Partnership will also explore establishment of a gender panel as a mechanism for regular dialogue between ADB and GWA on ADB's water sector initiatives and activities, including flood management.

To facilitate the development of the Partnership and its activities, ADB and GWA will jointly develop a work program within 2003.

Signed on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum on 18 March 2003 in Kyoto, Japan



Jennifer Francis
Executive Secretary
Gender and Water Alliance



Jan P. M. van Heeswijk
Director General, Regional and Sustainable
Development Department
Asian Development Bank