Panel on

Water, Women and Conflict

A View from the Field

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Approach to Water-Related Conflicts

*Major issues in Water, Women and Conflict*
- Sources of conflict
- Conflict arising from war, disaster, water scarcity, competition
- Cultural dynamics
- Human rights and governance issues
- Gender equity

*Key issue seen by water development organizations*
- Violence against women carrying out water-related activities in conflict-affected areas.
Field Perspective

- Women (and young girls) have the primary responsibility for water management in most households.
- The collection and use of water often places women in situations where the risk of violence is high.
- Women are particularly vulnerable when the cultural and societal norms are disrupted.
- The effects of conflict related to water can be physical, emotional and economic.
- They affect not only women and those with water responsibilities but eventually everyone in the community.
- Violence against women has cascading effects on the household and the community.
Why are Women More Vulnerable?

- Long distances
- Insecure areas
- No personal protection
- Infrastructure designs not consider women
- Women’s responsibilities
- Collection occurs at high risk times
- Few societal controls during conflicts
- Male community leaders not concerned
- Rape is used as a weapon of war
Impacts of Water-Related Conflicts on Women

**primary**
- Impacts on women water carriers

**secondary**
- Impacts on households

**tertiary**
- Impacts on the community
Impacts on Women Water Carriers

Water-related activities
- Water collection
- Defecation/urination
- Bathing
- Clothes washing
- Cultivating fields
- Home gardens
- Livestock

Impact
- Rape
- Kidnap
- Fear
- Choice of safer site with poorer water
- Injury from water loads
- Reduced water consumption
## Impacts on Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects on household</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Less water used</td>
<td>• Personal and family hygiene deteriorates</td>
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<td>• Water quality from alternate sources is unsafe</td>
<td>• Increase in diarrheal and other water-related diseases</td>
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<td>• Less time available for domestic activities</td>
<td>• Family cohesion suffers</td>
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<td>• Young girls required to carry water from distant sources</td>
<td>• Girls do not attend school</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reduced crop production</td>
<td>• Fewer cash crops for market</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reduced family income</td>
<td>• Family becomes more economically insecure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Poverty forces women to take risks</td>
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Impacts on Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects on community</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of violence affects decisions (water sources, no. of</td>
<td>• Social and emotional conditions decline</td>
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<tr>
<td>trips, urination and defecation, livelihood activities)</td>
<td>• Community becomes economically insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic activity declines</td>
<td>• Poverty grows</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community income decreases</td>
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Programming Responses and Mitigations

- Establishment of working groups on child protection and on gender.
- Protection/Gender advisors posted to humanitarian crises (Sudan/Darfur, DRC/Kivu, Haiti/earthquake).
- Development of a gender lens.
- Training of field staff in gender, protection and peacebuilding.
- Greater gender sensitivity and awareness of conflicts:
  - Afghanistan – IWRM and watershed programming
  - DRC/N. Kivu – plan water points that increase access and enhance protection
  - E. Chad/refugee camps – advise local partner to place water points which increase access and enhance protection
  - Sudan/Darfur - separate wells for farmers and herders; water committees including women
- Empowerment of women through education, economic opportunities and involvement in management and leadership
Research Needs

- Improved procedures to identify and assess conflicts around water points.
- General guidelines on women and conflict for WASH program managers.
- Institutionalize knowledge on the protection of women in all development sectors, especially water.
- Development of gender analyses and frameworks for action that do not exacerbate problems for women and girls.