The month of March is Water & Women month:

World Water Day (March 22) is intrinsically linked to Women’s Day (March 8):

**Water is endangered, if not engendered!**

**Actual development: the power of hand washing**

In 1850 a Hungarian obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelweis stepped up to the podium of the Vienna Medical Society’s lecture hall. What, exactly, was the doctor’s advice to his colleagues on that long ago night? It could be summed up in three little words: wash your hands!

Although it took a while, this advice saved a lot of lives especially those of women. Years later the Lancet called it one of the biggest medical inventions of our times. With the current virus outbreak, it is still one of the most valid prevention measures.

One of the priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals is 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a handwashing facility with soap and water.

Women for Water Partnership and its partners contribute to that SDG in all their activities, everywhere. May 5 is World Hand Hygiene Day; good to support and remind everybody! ([SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands 5 May 2020](#))

**World Water Development report on Climate.**

On 22 March, the World Water Development Report 2020 on climate is published:

Some of this we already knew in 2014: [Water and climate change : let's adapt](#)
SDG 13 and “the Paris agreement” – both dating back to 2015 – have addressed the issue – though from different angles. Our colleagues from GenderCC (GenderCC - who we are) have addressed the connection between gender, women and climate for years!

The World Water development report 2020 seen from a woman’s angle:

“Although climate change affects all groups of societies, the magnitude of impacts on women and girls will be much greater, increasing gender inequalities and threatening the health, well-being, livelihoods, and education. In times of drought, women and girls will spend more time to collect water from more distant sources, putting girls’ education at risk because of reduced school attendance.

Women and girls are exposed disproportionately to risks of water-borne diseases during floods due to lack of access to safe water, the disruption of water services and increased contamination of water resources.

Climate change will also jeopardize the livelihoods of women farmers in developing countries who depend heavily on access to water resources for food and crop production. Women make up on average 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries (Oxfam, 2019), as compared to about 30% in Europe and US (Eurostat, 2019; USDA, 2019). The proportion can be much higher, such as in Kenya, where about 86% of farmers in 2002 were women. The out-migration of males can lead to an increased role of women in agriculture in terms of greater workloads (Miletto et al., 2017; FAO, 2018). For these and other reasons, a gendered approach to the differential impacts of climate change on women and men, combined with the participation of women in climate-related policy development, is required. The need for disaggregated data on climate change, including by gender, is critical for the development of appropriate gender-sensitive and transformative policies (Miletto et al., 2019)

Women for Water Partnership likes to see and stresses to enhance:

- The link between women, water and sustainable development in policies and implementation (SDG 5, 6, 13 and Human Right to Water) is crucial. Combine the implementation for SDG 5 & 6 &13 and other water-related targets also at national level: advocate the link between women, water and sustainable development for empowerment and equality

- Women as actors to support: give them a voice and a vote! Position women as agents of change, leaders, professionals, experts and partners on equal footing with men in water and sustainable development programs to achieve equitable access to water for all for all uses

- Women’s participation in and having access to vocational education at all levels and thus creating access to the labor market

- Women and women’s organizations need and must get direct access to financial investments and instruments. Promote the allocation of funds for software, i.e. capacity building, (vocational) training operation and maintenance, monitoring and evaluation at all levels for women and their organizations;

- Women have found local solutions especially for adaptation; however, their activities are hardly recognized let alone up-scaled. Women should be heard and supported on this, thus combining traditional knowledge with climate adaption and mitigation measures, solutions and equality issues.

- Water and sanitation in the broadest sense (SDG6) needs sex-disaggregated data for policy setting and monitoring (both qualitatively and quantitatively)
Inclusion of 40% of women at all levels of decision-making; Advocate for inclusion of women on equal footing with men throughout all stages of projects, in a multi-stakeholder approach.

The “Leaving no one behind” of the SDGs and agenda 2030 is a powerful slogan; Enabling those whose voices are not strong enough (yet) and are unable to act on their own behalf is even more powerful.

Access to water and sanitation is a key enabler for women’s emancipation. Yes, women like to get a “little help from a friend”; without taking over. Women’s empowerment and “water” are intrinsically linked; The implementation of SDG5 and 6 together is a necessity.

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Are you with us? Become a personal friend. (https://www.womenforwater.org/support-us.html)