

Women for Water applauds EU gender Action Plan but also urges on.



Women for Water' steering committee member Lesha Witmer was one of the panelists (“Promoting a fair and inclusive green transition” (panel 5)) during the high-level event ‘Towards a gender equal world – The EU Gender Action Plan III and its contribution to Beijing +25’, 25 November 2020.

The EU published its third Gender Action Plan last week (https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls_en#header-5139) and held an online introduction and discussion on the topic.

(see also: <https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/factsheet-draft-gender-action-plan-v08.pdf>)

In her intervention, Lesha Witmer mentioned the following:

“It is innovative to publish the policy and guidance for “implementers” / operationalize at the same time. There are some innovative new ideas in the new action plan – for which I compliment the authors – but still a long way to go looking at the mentions “ of to be developed”. Mentioning of gender budgeting (3.1), consistently mentioning sex - / gender disaggregated data, asking for data on participants and speakers (in other words: is it meaningful / impactful?), find ways to ensure access to funding (directly). A focus on participation and access to vocational education / training is very welcome and very needed (objective 6)”.

She also asked ongoing attention for and action since the cost of failing to make progress on the SDG6 targets cannot be overstated – access to safe water (including sanitation and waste(water) management is crosscutting to almost all development – as the COVID crises has shown and has woken some of us up to. She added: ‘The impacts of faulty management of natural resources is different for women and men – both because of their biological make-up and their (gender) roles. A green transition can be helped by using, making authorities and companies aware of existing standards and tools like Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol, the Water Stewardship standard etc. They give good guidance, could be used as criteria for procurements / grants and have in common that they are / use multi-stakeholder approaches.”

She concluded: We need to encompass better and more investment and finances to reach a green transition to reach women and local organizations; currently only 0,5 – 2,1% of finances reaches women

directly and only approx. 3% of climate finance goes to water (adaptation). We need to listen to and learn from local initiatives: get away from the notion that because they are women or small/ local it cannot be interesting / valid. So investing time in listening and watching and learning is highly productive and better practice. Do not start by “sending” but start by listening.

WfWP will offer its assistance to the commission to fill in the gaps and develop the ideas further.