



Oral Statement
45th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3
ID with the SR on Water and Sanitation

Make Mothers Matter welcomes the guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to water and sanitation. We regret however that the gender perspective has not been included.

We would like to emphasize the specific burden that the lack of access to water and sanitation puts on women – especially mothers with caring responsibilities.

In many countries, rural areas are unserved or underserved, and women and their children bear the brunt of the unpaid work of fetching water - sometimes walking long distances and carrying heavy loads – several times a day¹.

In effect, through their unpaid work, women all too often make up for the lack of public water infrastructure and services, and subsidize provisioning by the State.

This not only impacts their right to health, but is also time and energy consuming, and therefore detrimental to their right to education, paid work and participation in public life. More generally, fetching water adds to women's unpaid care work, whose inequitable distribution is one of the main obstacles to their economic empowerment and gender equality.

We at MMM therefore call on Member States to take a gender perspective when considering any policy to realize the right to water and sanitation. This must recognize and take into consideration women's specific needs and constraints. It must also address the time poverty resulting from the lack of accessibility. In this regard, the realization of SDG target 5.4 on the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work must be considered, and its indicators also taken into account.

¹ Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017: Special focus on inequalities, UNICEF / WHO, 2019 <https://washdata.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/2019-07/jmp-2019-wash-households.pdf>