



**Stakeholder consultation on the preparation  
of the UN 2023 Water Conference  
Roundtable 3: data & information  
Oral Statement**  
*delivered by Valerie Bichelmeier*

Make Mothers Matter would like to draw attention to the gender dimension of the right to water and the **relevance and importance of Time-Use Data**.

According to UNICEF<sup>1</sup>, women and girls collectively spend **200 million hours** fetching water every single day - far more than men and boys.

Collecting water is drudgery and it adds to the unpaid domestic and care work whose inequitable distribution is at the root of Gender inequalities. For women and girls, the **opportunity costs** of collecting water are high, with far reaching effects:

- For girls, it means less time spent at school or dropping out of school altogether - at the expense of their future prospects
- For women, in particular when they are mothers, it means less time for income generating activities, which increases their vulnerability to poverty and violence

Time-Use data is critically important to develop public water infrastructure and services that will reduce the time and efforts that women and girls spend doing this strenuous and unpaid work.

Time-Use data already underlies target 5.4. of the 2030 development agenda, and Member States have committed to 'Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure'<sup>2</sup>.

Unfortunately Time-Use Surveys are seen as complex and expensive, and according to the ILO<sup>3</sup>, only 72 countries have conducted such surveys at least once, with only 27 of those having done so at least twice.

**Still, we are urging Member States to assess Time-Use when investing in water infrastructure and to explicitly aim at reducing the time that women and girls spend in collecting water.**

More generally, we are calling on Member States to prioritize target 5.4<sup>4</sup> and invest in Time-Use Surveys as these are very relevant not only to SDG 6 (water and sanitation) and SDG 5 (gender equality), but also SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), SDG 7 (energy), SDG 8 (decent work), SDG 9 (infrastructure), SDG 10 (inequality), and SDG 13 (Climate change)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-collecting-water-often-colossal-waste-time-women-and-girls>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>3</sup> Care work and Care jobs for the future of decent work, ILO report, 2018

<sup>4</sup> See also our 2022 HLPF written statement: <https://makemothersmatter.org/prioritising-sdg-5-target-5-4-to-recognize-the-work-of-mothers-and-advance-all-the-sdgs/>

<sup>5</sup> See indicator 5.4.1 metadata: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-04-01.pdf>

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*Make Mothers Matter (MMM) is an international NGO created in 1947 to raise the awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the contribution of mothers to social, cultural and economic development. MMM has no political or religious affiliations, and thus transparently voices the concerns of mothers at international level with permanent MMM representatives at the United Nations (General Consultative Status), the UNESCO and the European Union.*