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PRESS RELEASE

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WASH FORUM ENDORSES CONCEPT OF WOMEN LEADERS FOR WASH

Dakar, 2 December, 2004: As an important step forward from Dakar, the Global WASH Forum today endorsed the concept of the women leaders for WASH, a high level group of dedicated women leaders from around the world who will act as advocates for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all (WASH) at various national and international fora.

The Forum has decided that “such a group of women WASH advocates would be a unique instrument and help to respond to the objective of the *Water for Life International Water Decade, 2005-2015*”, part of which reads as, “...a greater focus on women as managers of water to help achieve internationally agreed water-related goals”. To be set up under the auspices of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), the group would function to advocate, lobby, communicate and mobilize further resources for WASH issues.

Objectives

The idea behind such a group is that it will communicate messages on policy and practice and

- raise the profile of WASH issues during international level policy-related events,
- lobby for the mobilization of additional resources for WASH issues,
- and encourage other leaders to join such a group, operating either at an international or national level.

Composition of the group

The Co-Chairs and co- conveners of the group will be the Hon. Maria Mutagamba of Uganda (Chair of the African Council of Ministers on Water) and the Hon. Hilde Johnson, Minister of International Development of Norway.

Membership of the group will be geared towards a diversity of perspectives, from a range of backgrounds and from all continents. The group of WASH advocates will not only represent politicians, but also a broader constituency such as international organizations, women’s groups; civil society and media networks.

Members are expected to be accomplished communicators, with a clear understanding of sustainable development and the importance of WASH issues. Initially, the group will be composed of representatives from the following categories:

- Heads of State
- Southern country policy-makers
- Northern country policy-makers
- United Nations organizations
- Non-governmental organizations
- Academia
- Public/private sector (agencies and corporations)
- Media networks
- Women's issues groups
- WSSCC (represented as convening organization)

For more information, check www.wsscc.org/dakar, or contact:

Sören Bauer : Communications and External Relations Officer

Tel: + 41 22 917 8674; + 00 221 510 9698; E -mail: bauers@who.int

Eirah Gorre-Dale: Special Representative of the WSSCC to United Nations

In Dakar, Tel: + 00 221 54 310 17, Email: Eirahgd@aol.com

Esther Kar: Resource Person, WSSCC Secretariat

Tel: + 00 221 5430025