Roles of Women in Water Governance and Sustainable Environmental Management in the Nile Basin

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Outline

• The departure point - Gender inequity
• Narratives about women in water and environmental management
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• Women professionals – example - Water utilities
• Spaces for transformation - Roadblocks and Opportunities
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• Conclusions
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The departure point- **Gender inequity**!

- Communities trapped in **biased socialization**
- **Women** mostly confined in informality!
- Commodification and commercialisation of natural resources accompanied with exclusion of women
- **Policy promises** for transformation not enforced
- **Organising the excluded** always end up in fatigue
Narratives about women in water and environmental management

• **Household level** - the role of women is defined by Responsibilities (Social care) reinforced by cultural norms

• **Community level** - women excluded in managing collective natural resources therefore absent in strategic positions

• Efforts to address barriers focus on reduce the burden on women (sympathy)

• **Institutional level - Policy tokenism** - Encouraging participation not control!

• National /Basin /Transboundary - *Incoherent policy commitments* - Promises-SDGs, Gender equality
Women professionals - Water utilities

- Attraction
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Advancement
Women professionals in Water: *Under-represented*!
World Bank Report, 2019

**AVERAGE SHARE OF WOMEN IN A UTILITY**

- *18%* of all utility workers are women.
- *23%* of engineers are women.
- *23%* of managers are women.
Spaces for transformation-Roadblocks and Opportunities

**Roadblocks**
- Social norms and stereotypes
- Power, Power, Power (skewed)
- Evidence too generic!
- Occupational segregation
- Critical mass for transformation
- Women rights organisations fragmented!

**Opportunities**
- Investing at organizing community and local governance levels
- Roles models working together at all levels
- Effective use of evidence to influence at all levels
- Using outreach campaigns to claim space for control and accountability
Conclusion

• **Transformation is possible** for women beyong participation and inclusion

• Quest for the **right data** for asking the **right questions** on natural resource control

• **Affirmative action** clouded by sympathy

• The **critical mass** is available but not sufficiently organised

• Women empowerment is fuzzy!
Recommendations

• Context based tools for Social engineering

• Need result-based strategies for policy reforms and transformation

• Education with organising women rights organizations to claim the space in natural resources governance

• Engage male champions- The emerging CIWA initiative of a dozen of male champions

• Appropriate data and indicators for women empowerment

• Climate change and its impacts an opportunity for awareness at community and local government levels

• Community seek to influence cultural beliefs and practices concerning water and natural resources than waiting for statutory laws

• Leveraging technologies for mobilization—digital communities