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MAINSTREAMING GENDER DIMENSIONS INTO WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EGYPT

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Women could be effective in sustaining water resources not only as users but also as decision-makers in addition to raising awareness between her mates and the entire family. Technical executive women staff contribute in water resource projects on various levels, whether engineers constructing water stations, computer specialists creating software and operation of plants, technicians in laboratories analyzing the quality of water, or administrative staff helping in the operations. Egyptian authorities gave the opportunity to women to contribute in various posts in water resources ministry.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF EEAA

In June 1997, the responsibility of Egypt's first full time Minister of State for Environmental Affairs was assigned as stated in the Presidential Decree no.275/1997. From thereon, the new ministry has focused, in close collaboration with the national and international development partners, on defining environmental policies, setting priorities and implementing initiatives within a context of sustainable development.

According to the Law 4/1994 for the Protection of the Environment, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) was restructured with the new mandate to substitute the institution initially established in 1982. At the central level, EEAA represents the executive arm of the Ministry.

The principal functions of the Agency include:

- Formulating environmental policies.
- Preparing the necessary plans for environmental protection and environmental development projects, following up their implementation, and undertaking pilot projects.
- The Agency is the National Authority in charge of promoting environmental relations between Egypt and other States, as well as Regional and International Organizations.

For the Agency to realize its aims, it has to undertake the following tasks:

- Preparing draft legislation and decrees related to the fulfillment of its objectives.
- Preparing state of the environment studies and formulating the national plan for environmental protection and related projects.
- Setting the standards and conditions to which applicants for construction projects must adhere before working on the site and throughout operations.
- Setting the rates and proportions required for the permissible limits of pollutants.
- Periodically collecting national and international data on the actual state of the environment and recording possible changes.
- Setting the principles and procedures for mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of projects.
- Preparing Environmental Contingency Plans and supervising their implementation.
- Participating in the preparation and implementation of the national and international Environmental Monitoring Programs and employing data and information gained thereof.
- Establishing Public Environmental Education Programs and assisting in their implementation.
- Coordinating with other empowered authorities for the control and safe handling of dangerous substances.
- Managing and supervising the natural reserves of Specially Protected Areas.
- Following up the implementation stages of International Conventions concerned with the environment.

- Suggesting an economic mechanism, which encourages the observation of pollution prevention procedures.
- Implementing pilot projects for the preservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment against pollution.
- Listing of national establishments and institutions, as well as experts qualified to participate in the preparation and implementation of environmental protection programs, and coordinating measures with the Ministry in charge of international cooperation to ensure that projects funded by donor organizations and states are compatible with environmental safety.
- Participating in the preparation of an integrated national plan for the coastal zone management of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea areas.
- Participating in the preparation of a plan to prevent illegal entry into the country of dangerous and polluting substances and waste.
- Preparing an annual report on the state of the environment to be submitted to the President and the Cabinet of Ministers.

THE GENDER UNIT OF THE EEAA: OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Objectives

The immediate objectives of the gender unit are:

- Educate women about environmental problems and health related topics.
- Enable women to perform their productive functions while protecting and conserving environment.
- Empower women to assure the responsibility of community development to promote sustainable development.

Activities

Within the EEAA, the main activities of the gender unit are:

- Raise the awareness of rural women about the environmental problems and the effects of these problems on human health.
- Raise the NGO role and show their activities by media or any effective way especially to women in rural area.
- Raise the media role in making women aware about their role in preserving the environment.
- Cooperation between all the NGOs working in the field of the environmental.
- Holding many lectures and seminars about women awareness and environmental preservation and health.

Awareness Programs

- Young women's role in environmental protection and environmental deterioration and the impacts on human's health.
- Women's role in waste management.
- Women's role in canal and drain water use prevention.
- Women role in food pollution protection and loss minimization.
- Young women's role in environmental human health awareness and addressing environmental health issues.
- Women's role in increasing indoor green areas in the countryside.
- Women's role in the use of Palm trees wastes for environmental pollution prevention.
- Women's role in environmental risks prevention in agricultural activities.
- Application of the integrated control system and ideal use of pesticides for water pollution prevention and water use rationalization.
- Women's role in the household pollution prevention by agricultural chemicals.
- Women's role in recycling agricultural wastes for the production of compost.

Main Achievements

- Establishment of five environmental training centers in fayoum (El-Shawashna, El-Khawagat, Kahk, Abu-Kassah, El Nazla) which are equipped with the newest technologies for training such as:
 - ❖ Computers,
 - ❖ Television and videos,
 - ❖ Data show, overhead projectors and photocopiers,
 - ❖ Offering a needed equipment for environmental small industries like Lathe (Arabisk).
- Organizing a regional conference of North upper Egypt including the governorate of Fayoum (Fayoum, Assiut, Menya, Beni suef).
- Organizing computer courses to educate girls and young ladies in the village around the centers.

WORK PLAN FOR GEWAMED

The Preparatory Phase (2 Months)

- To establish the project unit within the Ministry of Environment.
- To coordinate with the SRU/NWRC in order to harmonize the efforts at the National level.
- To establish a joint committee from relevant stakeholders to monitor and follow up the progress of the project.
- To finalize and approve of the project work plan.

The Implementation Phase (16 Months)

- To develop a National web site and to establish proper mechanisms for its maintenance and update.
- To conduct a national workshop for strengthening the cooperation between all governmental and non-governmental organizations concerning the gender issues and water management.
- To build a data-base on gender and water quality management
- To develop and to establish a plan for awareness raising and to disseminate the elaborated information.
- To establish a National Central Focal Point for the project activities.

Main Project Outputs

- To prepare a national report reviewing the existing National and Regional policies concerned with gender in water resources management.
- To prepare a report on raising public participation and awareness at different society levels.
- To prepare materials for awareness-raising on the importance of women role in water resources preservation; it can be used in elder education classes as well as youth summer camping.
- To develop a national data-base on Gender and water quality management.
- To launch the National web site for gender and water quality management.