EMERGING ISSUES IN GENDER AND WASH
Launch Event
Monday, 14 March 2016, 15:00 – 16:15 – Express Bar, UN Headquarters

Why this event?

This side event will launch a paper on emerging issues in gender and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), which is being published in UN Women’s Discussion Paper Series with the support of the Governments of Singapore and Germany. The peer-reviewed discussion paper showcases the literature review, analysis, and policy recommendations regarding the nexus between WASH, gender equality and women’s empowerment. The launch event is intended to catalyze interest, knowledge, and requisite action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2015/3).

The research covers four broad WASH areas – open defecation, avoidance of relieving oneself during the day, menstrual hygiene management, and manual scavenging. These major WASH challenges critically affect a large global population without access to adequate services and facilities, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable. Significantly, these challenges disproportionately and negatively affect women and girls. The UN Women discussion paper analyzes these issues in different geographical, economic, and socio-cultural contexts and assesses their impacts on women and girls, especially their safety and dignity. Based on the analysis, the paper makes recommendations for national policymakers, development practitioners, and gender equality advocates to engage on viable investments and interventions to address these challenges.

The launch event will provide all relevant stakeholders an opportunity to discuss, at the sidelines of the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the nexus between WASH and gender equality and women’s empowerment and related key issues, and to commit to implementing the appropriate recommendations to improve WASH policies for women and girls.

Format of the Event

This panel discussion, opened by the Governments of Singapore and Germany and moderated by UN Women, will culminate in the launch of a discussion paper on emerging issues in gender and WASH. The lead author, Dr. Isha Ray of the University of California, Berkeley, will present the main findings of the research and its major recommendations in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Discussants will
comment based on their wide experience and expertise in WASH policy-making, providing overall comments or emphasizing one or more of the challenges covered by the discussion paper. There will be time for a Q & A with the audience.

**Lead Author Presentation**

**Dr. Isha Ray** is a faculty member of the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the Co-Director of the Berkeley Water Center and a faculty member of the Institute for South Asia Studies. Professor Ray’s research interests are water, sanitation and development; water and gender; technology and development; and common property resources. Her research projects focus on access to water and sanitation for the rural and urban poor, and on the role of technology in improving livelihoods. She teaches courses on research methods in the social sciences, water and development, technology and development, and community-driven development. In addition to research and teaching, she has extensive past and ongoing experience in the non-profit sector on sustainable development, water, and gender equality.

**Discussants**

**Ms. Lizette Burgers** is the Senior Advisor on water, sanitation, and hygiene at the United Nation’s Children’s and Education Fund (UNICEF). Ms. Burgers leads UNICEF’s strategic programme planning and advocacy for sanitation and hygiene promotion. Prior, she worked in India where she was in charge of the overall management of UNICEF WASH programming in 14 states, focusing on evidence building and disparity reduction.

**Dr. Marni Sommer**, DrPH, MSN, RN, is an Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Dr. Sommer has worked in global health and development for twenty years on issues ranging from improving access to essential medicines to humanitarian relief in conflict settings. Dr. Sommer’s particular areas of expertise include the intersections of gender, health and education for girls and boys transitioning into adulthood in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. She has developed puberty books for girls, with a focus on menstrual hygiene management, and for boys, in Tanzania, Cambodia, Ghana, and Ethiopia. Dr. Sommer serves as the Executive Editor of the journal *Global Public Health*.

**Logistics**

**Date**: Monday, 14 March 2016  
**Time**: 15:00 – 16:15 Hours  
**Location**: Express Bar, UN Headquarters, New York  
**Visitor Passes**: For those without UN ground passes, please contact Ms. Carla Kraft (carla.kraft@unwomen.org).

For further information, please contact Yasmin Ali [Yasmin_ALI@mfa.gov.sg](mailto:Yasmin_ALI@mfa.gov.sg), Christiane Hullmann [christiane.hullmann@diplo.de](mailto:christiane.hullmann@diplo.de) and Carla Kraft [carla.kraft@unwomen.org](mailto:carla.kraft@unwomen.org).
60th Commission on the Status of Women Side Event

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**Agenda**

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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| 15:00 – 15:10 | Introduction and Opening Remarks | Dr. Purna Sen, Director of Policy, UN Women (Moderator)  
Ambassador Karen Tan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to the UN (Chair)  
Ambassador Harald Braun, Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN |
| 15:10 – 15:25 | Presentation of Discussion Paper | Dr. Isha Ray, University of California, Berkeley |
| 15:25 – 15:50 | Panel Discussion               | Ms. Lizette Burgers, Senior Advisor on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, UNICEF  
Dr. Marni Sommer, Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University  
Dr. Isha Ray, University of California, Berkeley |
| 15:50 – 16:10 | Q & A                          | Q & A                                                                    |
| 16:10 – 16:15 | Closing Remarks                | Ambassador Karen Tan  
Dr. Purna Sen |