

To the CEDAW Committee, the Working Group on Rural Women

From the Gender, Human Rights and Water Governance (GWGA) in Africa Research Group, by  
Professor Anne Hellum, Institute of Women's Law, University of Oslo

#### SUBMISSION FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON RURAL WOMEN MEETING 7 OCTOBER

The research project Gender, Human Rights and Water Governance (GWGA), based at the Southern and Eastern African Regional Center of Women's Law (SEARCWL) shared its preliminary research findings at its closing conference at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in Pretoria 25th and 26th September with the Chair of the CEDAW Working Group on Article 14 Ms. Naela Gabr and CEDAW Committee member Oby Nwanko.

We would like to thank the CEDAW Working Group members for a constructive exchange of perspectives on rural women's access to water for livelihood and their participation in water governance.

At the Conference it was agreed with the Chair of the CEDAW Working Group on Rural Women that GWGA will send its final submission, based on thorough analysis of our empirical research, to the Working Group's next meeting in connection with CEDAW Committee's session in February 2014.

A major concern that we would like to emphasize in the event of the Working Group's 7 October meeting is:

To ensure real legal protection of water for livelihood, particularly the multiple sources of water that rural women rely on as providers of care and food, is a challenge for international and national law. Towards this end existing water governance structures need to put water for livelihood on an equal footing with commercial water uses. Measures ensuring equal and meaningful participation by different groups of women at all levels of water governance need to be taken. Furthermore, mechanisms making existing water governance institutions accountable to different groups of rural women on the ground, particularly the poor and vulnerable, need to be put in place.

We look forward to future cooperation with the CEDAW Committee Working Group on Rural Women.

Your sincerely

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On behalf of the GWGA