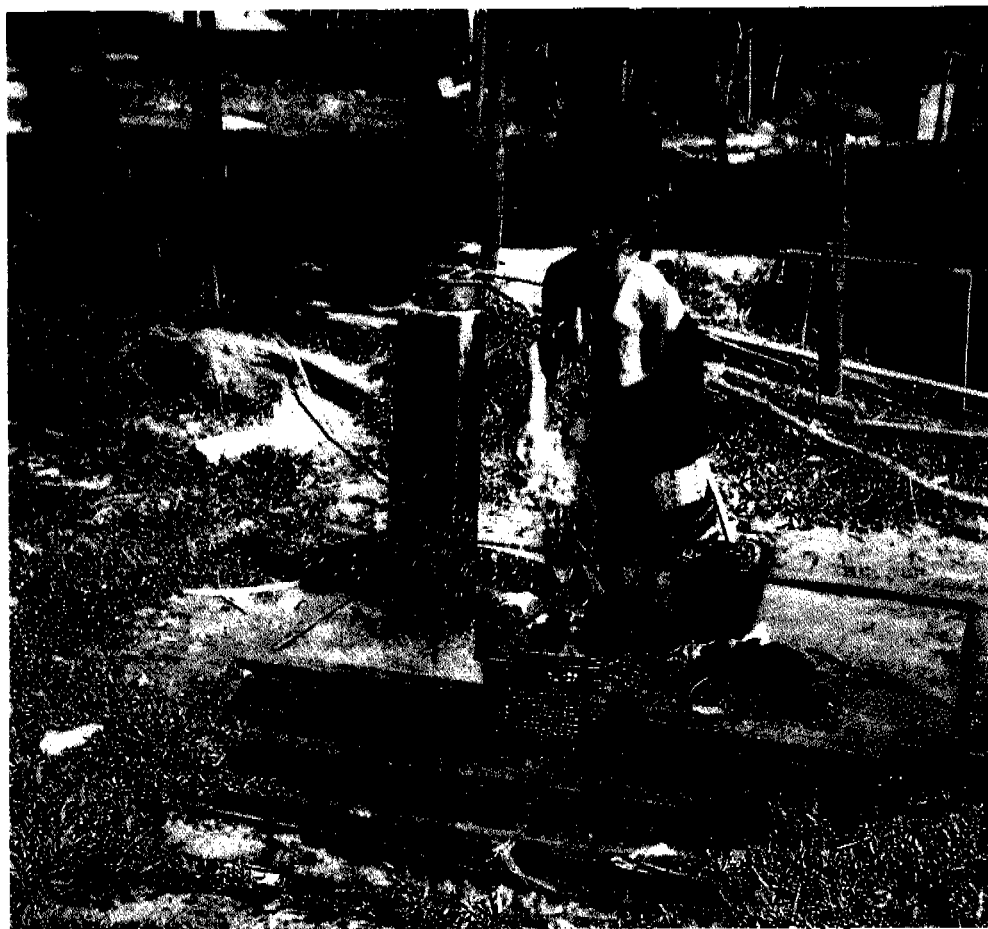


ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**REPORT ON PHASE I
OF THE PROJECT ON PROMOTION OF
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PROTECTION AND
MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

**NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS ON
WOMEN, WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION**



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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 1-212-869-7000
Fax: 1-212-869-7001
E-mail: esap@un.org



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Photographs:

Front cover: Nam saard (clean water) programme at Ban Done Savanh Village, Lao People's Democratic Republic (courtesy of the Lao National Mekong Committee secretariat)

Back cover: Sitio Mendez Community, Barangay Baesa of Quezon City, Philippines (Yukie Hori)

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The United Nations Training Package on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation was prepared by INSTRAW/ILO-Turin Centre and DDSMS. For further details, please contact Ms Borjana Bulajic, Social Affairs Officer, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, Cesar Nicolas Pension 102-A, Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana, tel (809) 685-2111, fax (809) 685-2117.

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

During the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990), it was demonstrated that involvement of women in a number of water supply and sanitation projects led to better performance of projects, less wastage of water and a cleaner environment around the water source.¹ However, the pivotal role that women play as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment has seldom been reflected adequately in the process of planning, development and management of water resources and related decision-making.

In the initial groundwork for the Decade, laid down at the United Nations Water Conference, held at Mar del Plata, Argentina, in March 1977, it was stated that special emphasis should be given to the situation and to the role of women in the area of public participation. The United Nations Training Package on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation was prepared and tested in Africa at a workshop in September 1991 and in the ESCAP region in September 1992 at a regional workshop held in Bangkok. In both workshops, the participants were drawn from water resources agencies, health/social agencies and women's organizations. The training package consists of five modules:

- I. The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and beyond;
- II. Participation of women in planning, choice of technology and implementation of water supply and sanitation projects;
- III. Role of women in hygiene education and training activities for water supply and sanitation projects;
- IV. Participation of women in management of water resources, water supply and waste disposal;
- V. Evaluation and monitoring of water supply and sanitation programmes, projects and the role of women.

The regional workshop held in Bangkok proved the importance of and need for a series of training seminars at the national level to train a greater number of national focal-point trainers who were involved in water supply and sanitation projects. Although it had been widely recognized that water projects were more successful in terms of performance and sustainability with the involvement of women, further development of strategies to involve women systematically and effectively in the water supply and sanitation sector was necessary. National workshops demonstrating the use of already tested United Nations training modules to a considerably large core group of potential national trainers were therefore expected to assist countries in developing such strategies to improve the performance and sustainability of their water supply and sanitation projects.

¹ See "Achievements of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade 1981-1990" (A/45/329), paras. 20-27.

In the above context, a project proposal was formulated, and financial assistance from the Government of Japan was secured, for the implementation of phase I in 1996/1997 with the following immediate objectives:

(a) Training of national-level trainers in the use of the training modules of the United Nations Training Package on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation, which in turn would enable them to influence the community decision-making process on water resources and sanitation management issues;

(b) Further development and adaptation of the United Nations training package to support a national guideline in the areas involving women and water resources and sanitation.

Approximately 30 potential trainers, policy planners and decision makers in the water supply and sanitation sector in each of four selected developing countries of the ESCAP region would receive training at national workshops on the use of the United Nations training modules. It was expected that participants in the national workshops would take active roles in the follow-up programmes and that the success of such follow-up programmes would be monitored from time to time.

B. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

According to a recent ESCAP study,² achievements made under the Decade led to about 2.5 billion people being served with water and 916 million with adequate sanitation in 1994 in the Asian and Pacific region. However, the numbers of people without access to safe water and adequate sanitation were 626 million and 2,205 million respectively. With the rapidly increasing population growth rate in the region (to a total population of 3.4 billion people by 2000), the important challenges in the water resources sector are to meet the rapidly increasing water demand and to enhance the efficient use of water resources. With these challenges in mind, the present report was prepared with the aim of providing relevant lessons for the following purposes:

(a) To make use of the United Nations training modules on women, water supply and sanitation for promoting women's participation in the respective national programmes on water supply and sanitation;

(b) To organize similar national training workshops in support of the formulation and implementation of strategies on integrating the role of women in the national programmes on water supply and sanitation;

(c) To identify priority areas for promoting the role of women in the protection and management of water resources, especially for water supply and sanitation.

² "Challenges of private sector involvement in the development of water supply and sanitation infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific" (ENR/EGM/WSSP/1), 16 February 1996.

I. PREPARATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE I

A. MAJOR CHANGES IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION

After the project was approved, the following major changes occurred in the preparations for implementation:

(a) The Department for Development Support and Management Services provided the training materials but could not provide the services of its expert, as originally planned, owing to a lack of financial resources to cover the related travel expenses;

(b) Since the adoption of the project idea by the participants at the last regional workshop in Bangkok in 1992, several key officials in the participating countries have either been promoted or transferred. Out of the four countries originally planned in the project document, contact through the original focal points could be successfully re-established in only one. New focal points had to be identified in the other three. Furthermore, during the intervening period, important achievements had been made in water supply and sanitation in several countries of the region. In these countries, water supply and sanitation had become routine activities, and no priority or urgency was accorded. As a consequence, although two countries in the original plan reconfirmed their interest to take part in phase I, mobilization of the national contribution to hold the training workshops could not take place within the project's duration;

(c) Coordination of the implementation of national policies related to women, water supply and sanitation in the participating countries was much more complex than originally expected and differed from one country to another. This complexity called for a more active role by the focal agencies and local experts in the national workshops and well-defined related follow-up action programmes in the respective countries.

B. REQUIRED MEASURES

In view of the above-mentioned changes, the following measures were taken in consultation with the participating countries and the donor:

(a) *More active role for national experts and consultants:* national experts and consultants were requested and agreed to play a leading role in integrating practical experience, local knowledge and corresponding national policies into the training modules, instead of using the services of the expert from the Department for Development Support and Management Services, as originally proposed in the project document. The national experts and consultants were therefore responsible for modules II, III and IV, which required practical knowledge in the respective countries. Two ESCAP staff members were responsible for modules I and V, providing international experience and practice. In addition, the national experts and consultants prepared and submitted a report for each national training workshop consolidating the recommendations of the participants for follow-up action;

(b) *New participating countries:* the Philippines and Thailand reconfirmed their participation in phase I, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam agreed to participate in the implementation of phase I. For the latter two countries, the secretariat carried out a preparatory mission to assist in detailed technical matters related to the organization of the respective national workshops;

(c) *Enhanced role of the national focal agencies:* in order to strengthen the future role of the national focal agency and thus ensure the sustainability of the project's achievements, the following approach was adopted:

- (i) The national experts and consultants were selected, appointed and supervised by the respective national focal point agencies in consultation with ESCAP in order to ensure a good partnership after the national training workshops. In this connection, disbursements of honorariums to the national experts and consultants were made through the respective national focal point agencies;
- (ii) Apart from the participation of key national agencies working on water supply and sanitation in the workshops, other international agencies and bilateral donors working in the respective countries were invited by the focal agencies to present their experiences, ongoing activities and future work. The participation of those agencies was expected to lead to active support for the implementation of the recommended follow-up action.

Before the above-mentioned measures were adopted, the participating countries were consulted with a view to mobilizing additional national resources to enable the project to be implemented within the approved budget.

C. NEW CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS IN REGIONAL STRATEGIES ON DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

The fundamental premise of regional strategies on water supply and sanitation is active participation by all the countries through the respective national programmes on water supply and sanitation. On the basis of that premise, the possible strategic elements of regional programmes on water supply and sanitation would include (a) promotion of community participation; (b) promotion of private sector participation, (c) mobilization of external technical and financial assistance; and (d) improvement in the efficiency of related public investment programmes. With respect to the first strategic element, the experience of the Decade³ demonstrated that people were as vital to effective water and sanitation services as pumps and pipes. There was enormous potential in findings from community-level interventions to support national programmes in water supply and sanitation:

- (a) There was an appreciation of and therefore a willingness to pay for safe water;
- (b) Practical, visible water services could stimulate community action for health, education, the economy and the environment;
- (c) Women, the most underserved and overworked people in poor communities, benefited directly and pervasively from improved water and sanitation;
- (d) Rural communities were highly creditworthy, and women were often the most efficient managers of community water finances.

³ See UNICEF, "How to achieve the global goals for water supply and sanitation", March 1994.

The participation of women in addressing water supply and sanitation issues to meet the global targets for sustainable development set by the 1992 Earth Summit through Agenda 21 therefore constitutes a strategic element for effective national programmes and efficient use of resources. In this context, the national workshops initiated under the framework of this project aimed to achieve the following:

(a) To transfer international experience and United Nations expertise to related national programmes on women, water supply and sanitation in the respective countries. This transfer is expected ultimately to enhance participation of women and thus improve community involvement in water supply and sanitation. The sustainability of the results of these improvements depends mainly on the continuity and sustainability of related training programmes in the respective participating countries;

(b) To create an opportunity for exchange of related experiences with other international agencies involved in the related national programmes on women, water supply and sanitation;

(c) To identify possible complementary areas for improvement of national programmes on women, water supply and sanitation and future cooperation with ESCAP.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

A. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The national focal agencies, as the national counterparts of ESCAP in the respective countries, were mainly responsible for the organization of the national workshops. In close consultation with ESCAP, the focal agencies selected participants and national consultants, based on the criteria set out in the project aide-mémoire. In almost all of the countries, ESCAP could provide technical assistance in the organization of the workshop. In the case of the Philippines, the services of the regional adviser on water supply and sanitation of the regional office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were obtained instead. In addition, support was also received from the offices of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNDP-World Bank programmes on water supply and sanitation and the World Health Organization in the organization and conduct of the workshops. These international agencies shared their experiences in the respective countries as well as their respective international programmes. In all of the national workshops, a one-day field trip was also included.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

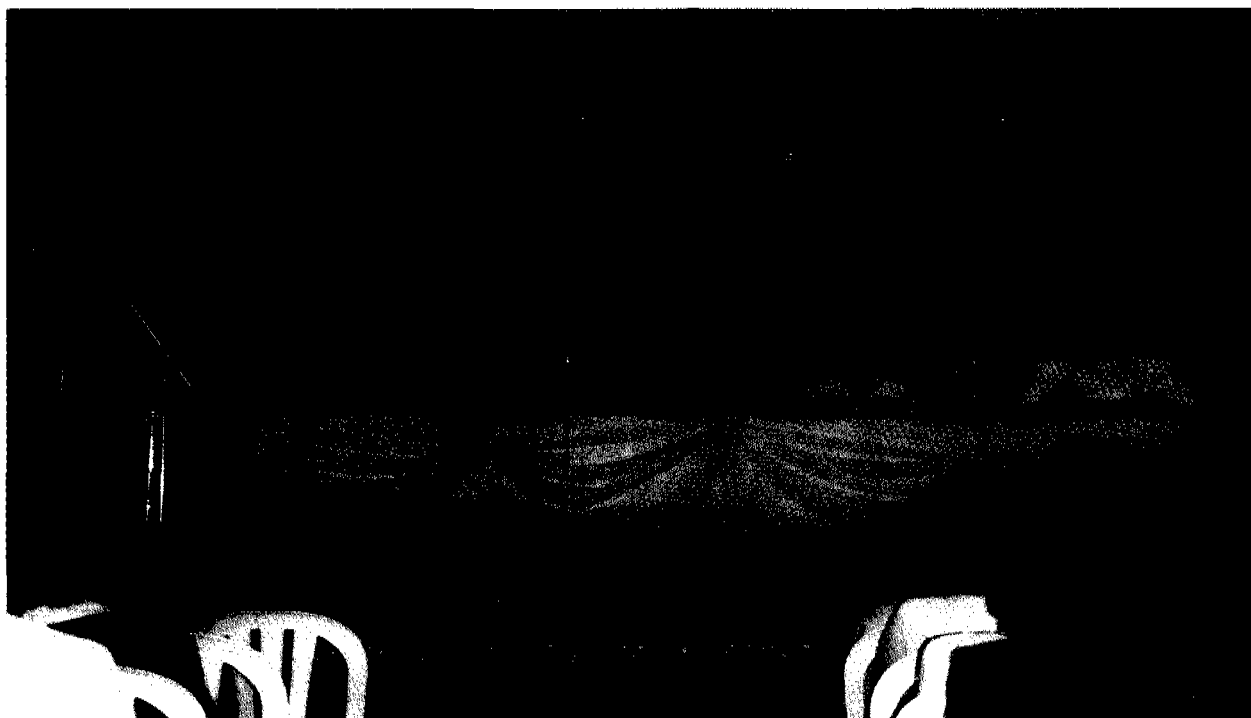
1. *Philippines*

The workshop was spearheaded by the Local Water Utilities Administration, which served as the national focal agency. The International Training Network, Philippines, was recruited as the firm which supplied consultants for the project to present modules II, III and IV. They provided the situation of water supply and sanitation in the Philippines and prepared a case study to highlight women's participation in water supply and sanitation in an urban area, Sitio Mendez, Barangay Baesa of Quezon City, which served as the field-visit site for the participants.

The national workshop on the use of training modules for women, water supply and sanitation was held at the headquarters of the Local Water Utilities Administration from 21 to 25 October 1996, with 37 participants from various national government institutions, local government units, water districts and non government organizations. Of the 37 participants 7 were planners, 24 implementers and trainers, and 6 senior experts from various international agencies working in the Philippines and in Asia.

2. *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

The national training workshop in the Lao People's Democratic Republic was organized in Vientiane from 18 to 22 November 1996 by the secretariat of the Lao National Mekong Committee in cooperation with ESCAP. Technical assistance was received from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project of the Ministry of Public Health, from the Lao National Women's Union and the Lao Water Supply Company of the Ministry of Construction, Transport, Post and Communication. The expert from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation



The opening ceremony of the national workshop in Manila was presided over by Ms. Teresita S. Castillo, Executive Director of the National Commission on the role of Filipino Women and Mr. Antonio De Vera, Administrator of the Local Water Utilities Administration of the Philippines, a UNICEF regional adviser and a representative of the ESCAP secretariat.



Field visit to a slum area of Manila where community participation was a driving force for a better water supply.



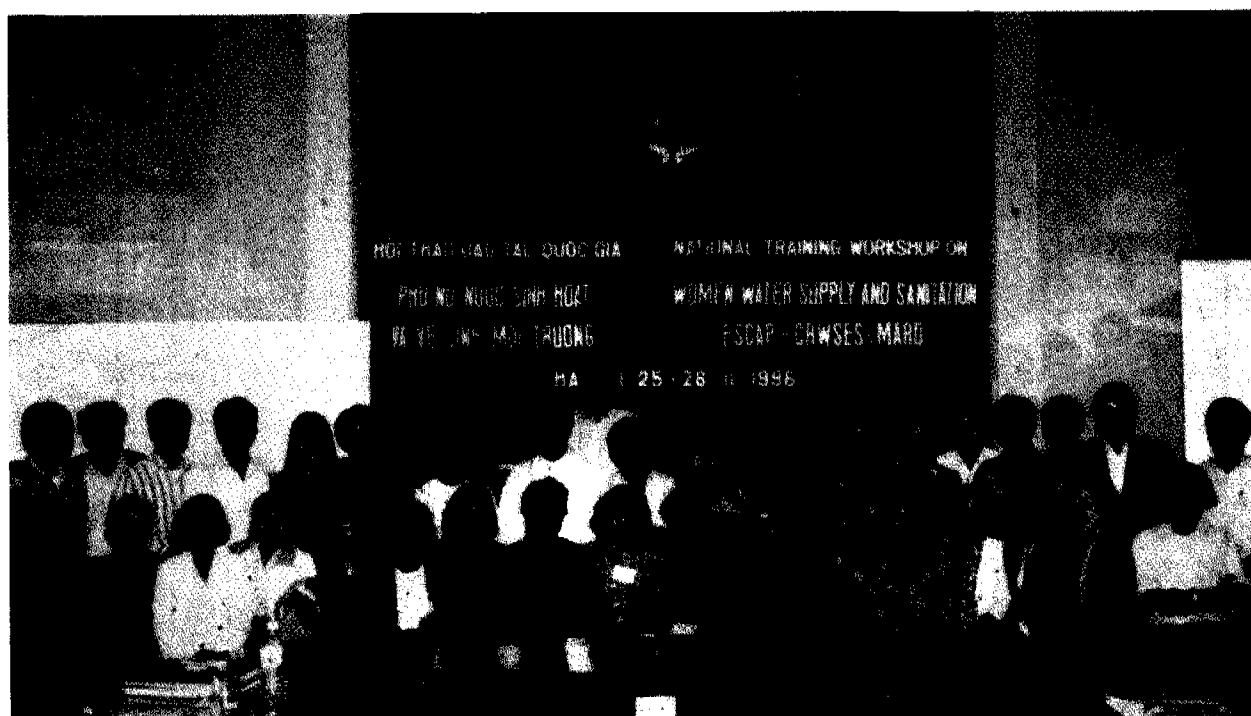
The national workshop in Vientiane was inaugurated by Mrs Khamphet Pholsena, Vice-President of the Lao Women's Union.



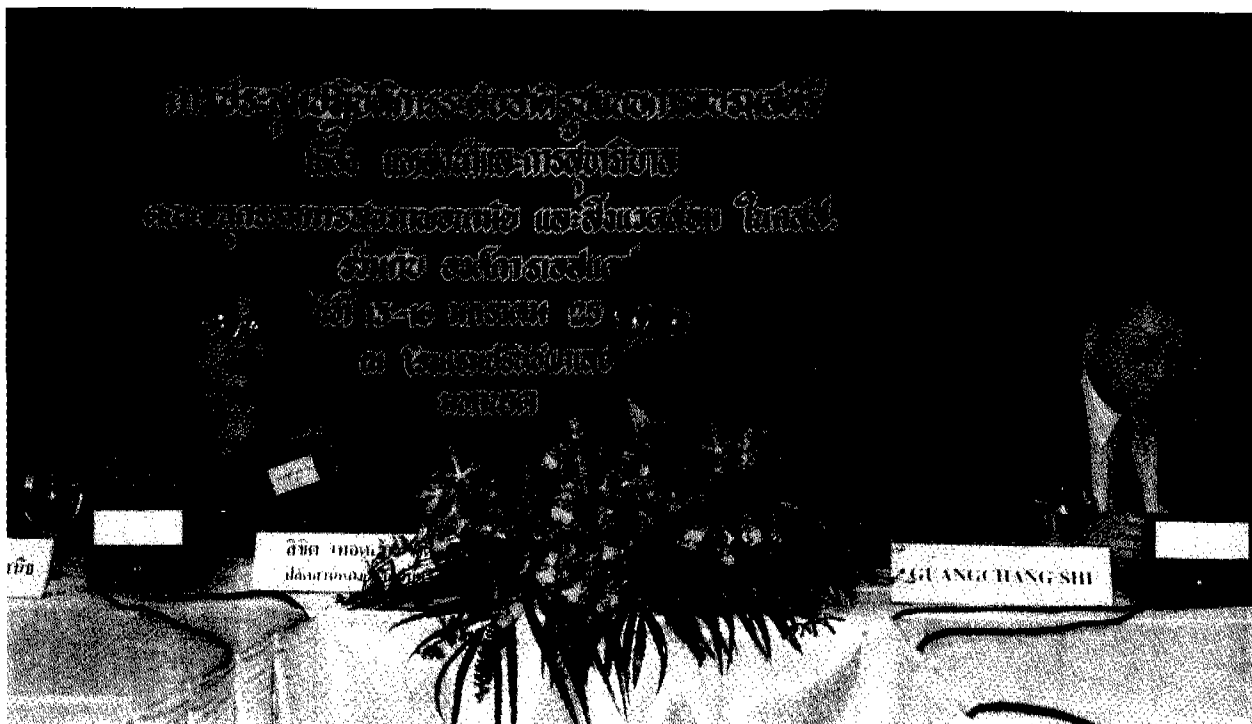
Field visit to a rural area about 100 km south-east of Vientiane where a water supply and sanitation project was recently implemented.



Participating in the opening ceremony of the national training workshop in Hanoi were H.E. Mr Nguyen Quang Ha, First Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, H.E. Mr Pham Song, Chairman of the National Committee on Water Supply and Sanitation, H.E. Mrs Nguyen Minh Phuong, member of the Presidium of the Viet Nam National Women's Association, and the UNICEF representative in Viet Nam.



Participants and resource persons at the national training workshop in Hanoi.



The opening ceremony of the national workshop in Bangkok: Mr. Likhit Therdsteeasukdi, Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, the Chief of the ESCAP Environment and Natural Resources Management Division, and Prof. Pensri Phijaisanit, Secretary of the National Committee on Health and Environment of the National Commission on Women's Affairs of Thailand.



Field visit to Nonthaburi Province, Thailand.

Project acted as the leader of the national consultant team. In addition, technical lectures were provided by the Project Officer on Water and Environmental Sanitation of the UNICEF office in Vientiane and the Country Programme Manager of the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme.

Taking part in the workshop were 34 participants: 14 participants from the provinces and 20 senior officials from the central agencies. A field trip was organized for the participants to visit the water supply systems at Ban Pak Kha Young and Ban Dane Savanh in Vientiane Province.

3. *Viet Nam*

The national training workshop on women, water supply and sanitation was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Hanoi from 25 to 29 November 1996. The workshop was organized by the Centre for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation in cooperation with ESCAP, the Viet Nam Women's Union and UNICEF-Viet Nam. The Centre for Resources Development and Environment (a Vietnamese non-governmental organization) was recruited as the leading consultant to supervise the preparation of lecture notes for the three modules, to coordinate technical inputs and to provide technical guidance for the workshop, including preparation of the report.

The workshop was attended by 30 full-time participants from 16 national agencies, 11 provincial water supply and sanitation agencies and 2 non-governmental organizations and a university. In addition, 12 senior government officials, 10 experts from international agencies and 14 observers participated in the workshop. The three training modules (II, III and IV) were presented with some modifications so as to focus mainly on women, water supply and sanitation in the rural areas of the country. A field visit to the Kim Boi water supply and sanitation project was organized, and post-evaluation was made as a case study for participants.

4. *Thailand*

The national workshop on the use of training modules for women, water supply and sanitation was organized in Bangkok from 13 to 17 January 1997 by the National Committee on Health and Environment of the National Commission on Women's Affairs in cooperation with ESCAP. There were 33 persons taking part in the workshop: 18 participants (14 senior government officials and 4 representatives of non-governmental organizations) and 15 experts in the capacity of invited guests, resource persons and national consultants.

The office of the National Commission on Women's Affairs served as the secretariat of the workshop, and the members of the National Committee on Health and Environment provided technical guidance on the selection of participants and expert advice during the deliberations of the Workshop. A field trip was jointly organized by the Department of Health and the Nonthaburi Provincial Authority for the workshop participants to meet women volunteers and discuss their involvement in water supply and sanitation as well as in the Chao Phraya River Rehabilitation Programme.

C. IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

High-ranking officials participated in the opening and closing sessions, thus giving the national workshops adequate attention. The important features of the organization of the workshops are highlighted below.

1. *Philippines*

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Executive Director of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and the Administrator of the Local Water Utilities Administration. The Executive Director gave a keynote lecture to provide valuable inputs to the discussions of the participants during the workshop, taking into consideration the Philippine national plan for gender-responsive development. The Administrator of the Local Water Utilities Administration and experts from the regional and national offices of UNICEF participated in the closing session of the workshop.

2. *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

The opening ceremony was presided over by H.E. Mrs Khamphet Pholsena, Vice-President of the Lao Women's Union. She also delivered an opening address emphasizing the importance of promoting the role of women and their participation in the development and management of water supply and sanitation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. With a keen interest in the subject, Mrs Khamphet Pholsena also presided over the closing session, which was attended by senior experts from UNDP, UNICEF, the UNDP-World Bank Water Supply and Sanitation Programme and the Asian Development Bank.

The ESCAP team had the opportunity to brief H.E. Mr Kithong Vongxay, Chairman of the Lao National Mekong Committee, and concurrently Chairman of the Mekong River Commission for 1996/1997, on the results of the national workshop and its recommendations for follow-up action.

3. *Viet Nam*

The national workshop in Viet Nam was given good coverage by the local media. Its opening ceremony was presided over by H.E. Mr Nguyen Quang Ha, First Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Also participating in the opening session were H.E. Mr Pham Song, former Minister of Public Health and currently Vice-Chairman of the Steering Board of the National Programme for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Mme Nguyen Minh Phuong, Presidium Member of the Viet Nam Women's Union, and the UNICEF representative to Viet Nam.

At the closing session, the Chief Technical Adviser of the UNDP-World Bank Project on a National Strategy for Rural Water Supply in Viet Nam confirmed his interest to build on the achievements of the workshop. After the workshop, the ESCAP team met separately with H.E. Mr Nguyen Quang Ha and the UNICEF representative and briefed them on the workshop's results and proposed follow-up action.

4. Thailand

The opening session was chaired by Mr Likhit Therdsteeerasukdi, Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, the Chief of the ESCAP Environment and Natural Resources Management Division and Prof. Pensri Phijaisanit, Secretary of the National Committee on Health and Environment of the National Commission on Women's Affairs. Following the opening session, M.R. Mr Chalermsook Boonthai, Vice-Chairperson of the National Committee on Health and Environment, gave an overview of the promotion of the role of women in water supply and sanitation in Thailand and the expectations of the National Committee on Health and Environment from the workshop. The closing session and closing ceremony were chaired by Khunying Amphorn Meesook, Chairperson of the National Committee on Health and Environment.

Under the chairmanship of Khunying Amphorn Meesook, a working session of the members of the organizing committee, resource persons and the ESCAP team was held at the end of the workshop to summarize the achievements and to prioritize the activities of the action plan recommended by the participants.

5. Message from the Executive Secretary of ESCAP

The Executive Secretary of ESCAP sent a message to the participants of all four national workshops. The message informed the participants of the importance of the common efforts generated by the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and the ongoing efforts in the United Nations system.

He reminded the participants of the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995, that efforts directed at rural areas and the urban poor should be made with emphasis on providing poor people with a water supply and sanitation and that decisions should be reached based on dialogue with the concerned people and communities to generate public awareness, social mobilization and grass-roots involvement. During that process, special attention should be paid to the role and potential of women. He also pointed out that the subject had also been emphasized by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, when it addressed the lack of adequate recognition of and support for the contribution of women to the conservation and management of natural resources and to the safeguarding of the environment. The Fourth World Conference on Women called on governments and others involved to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, including, as appropriate, an analysis of their effects on women and men before decisions were taken.

He stressed that, in order to meet the above challenges, water supply, sanitation and capacity-building at the community level were central to sustainable development, as stipulated in Agenda 21 and that the battle for people-centred and sustainable development would be won or lost in the hamlet and home, in every village and town, and in the daily enterprise of every member of the global community.

The concept of people-centred sustainable development had been integrated into the efforts of ESCAP to contribute towards universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation to all as early as possible. Among the activities of ESCAP in that direction was

phase I of the project on national training workshops on the use of training modules on women, water supply and sanitation. In that connection, ESCAP hoped to build on the achievements of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade from the international and national efforts to promote the role and participation of women in the development and management of water resources in general and water supply and sanitation in particular. The efforts of ESCAP were aimed at the following:

- (a) Strengthening strategic elements for grass-roots involvement;
- (b) Promoting systematic integration of women's participation in the process of water resources development and management;
- (c) Promoting complementarity of regional and international efforts towards universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

He pointed out that the catalytic role of ESCAP in attaining the above goals needed to be seen in the context of an overall development process, in which national efforts formed the main thrust.

III. IMPORTANT OUTCOMES OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

A. PHILIPPINES

A total of five sessions with group work could adequately capture and enrich each participant's views, experiences, knowledge, skills and attitude regarding the topics in the modules. A significant output of the national consultation is an action plan comprising each participant's short- and long-term plans in line with his or her work. The group work enabled the participants to devise the action plan through discussion and brainstorming of the issues that were besetting the water supply and sanitation sector bearing on their current work. Consequently, policies to answer those issues were proposed. Individual action plans were also presented, which further enriched the outcome of the workshop. Below are some recommendations stemming from the discussion of the action plans:

(a) To review the modules in the light of current developments in the Philippines and produce a translation into Tagalog. That could be undertaken under the auspices of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women by the International Training Network, Philippines;

(b) To develop modules on women, water supply and sanitation that could be used by top management in government offices;

(c) To review and revise existing data on water supply and sanitation and include a gender profile;

(d) Various mechanisms were in place to facilitate the implementation of water supply and sanitation projects. However, women's involvement and participation needed to be institutionalized and strengthened by policies and structures. Specifically, there was a need to evaluate current training programmes and other capability-building activities for water supply and sanitation vis-à-vis women's involvement;

(e) To tap local government officials with a view to ensuring the prioritization of water supply and sanitation projects with women's participation in their locality. That meant appropriating resources to operationalize gender and development in their programmes, activities and projects. Specifically, it meant allocating 5 per cent of general appropriations to strengthening or creating institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender and development into local government plans, activities and projects;

(f) To create institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender and development into the local government's plans, activities and projects;

(g) To tap the Social Development Fund of Congressmen for continued implementation of projects on women, water supply and sanitation in the provinces;

(h) To advocate that senators should pursue policies requiring women on the governing board of every government institution;

(i) To develop community-based programmes that would empower women. Participants from non-governmental organizations recommended organizing women for water supply and sanitation;

(j) To include watershed management in the planning of water-supply projects.

B. LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Based on the experiences of the national workshop in Manila, various ideas and recommendations generated from group work during the discussion of the modules were reviewed to identify a few priority items for further consideration by the participants. After the five regular sessions, the participants were divided into three groups to examine three priority topics further: (a) involvement of women in planning, choice of technology and implementation of projects and in operation and maintenance; (b) the role of the community, especially those communities working with the Lao Women's Union, in decision-making with regard to water-supply and sanitation projects; and (c) the role of women in hygiene education and other activities, especially those related to environmental protection. From those discussions, three project proposals were formulated:

(a) *Training women in water supply and sanitation.* The purpose of the project was to increase the knowledge of women in water supply and sanitation activities and to promote the importance of their participation. It was proposed that the project should be implemented by the Lao Women's Union, in collaboration with experts from the National Water Supply and Environmental Health Programme and other national agencies concerned, in the two target provinces of Luang Prabang and Vientiane. The project was expected to enhance women's awareness of water supply and sanitation, reduce the workload of women and children, increase their income and improve the quality of their health;

(b) *Promoting the role of women in water supply and sanitation.* The project aimed to improve environmental protection and to reduce morbidity and mortality rates by promoting the role of women in water supply and sanitation. The project would cover all of the 17 provinces and one special region of the country with a pilot phase to be carried out in one year by the Lao Women's Union. The project would enhance participation of women in various stages of ongoing and future water supply and sanitation projects and programmes in the country;

(c) *Promoting the role of women in community-based water supply and sanitation services.* The project was proposed as a means to promote more effective community involvement in the management of water supply and sanitation by mobilizing the support of local women. It was recommended that the Lao Women's Union should be the key implementing agency with support from local authorities and community workers.

Cooperation with donor countries and international organizations for development of the water supply and sanitation sector was considered essential for the implementation of the above-mentioned projects in view of the country's current level of economic development.

C. VIET NAM

Under arrangements similar to those made for the national workshop in Vientiane, the participants of the national workshop in Hanoi focused on the following four themes in their discussion of follow-up action:

(a) The workshop shared the idea that women played an important role in the development and management of water supply and sanitation. Rural and suburban women needed to be informed and knowledgeable about water supply and sanitation. A number of organizations and agencies were currently involved in dissemination of information and education in water and sanitation, but their activities were not linked to the ongoing water supply and sanitation projects. The participants decided to consider ways to improve the current

mechanisms for dissemination of information and education in water supply and sanitation in order to support the national target of supplying 80 per cent of the rural population with drinking water and appropriate sanitation by the year 2000;

(b) The workshop noted that achievements had been made in the participation of communities in rural water supply and sanitation, especially in project maintenance and operation. However, the role of women within those communities was not clearly defined and was generally not promoted as it should be. The participants agreed to focus their discussion on formulating a programme to review current project procedures and to improve related project manuals by including items on women's participation in the study, planning, development and management of rural water supply and sanitation projects;

(c) The workshop recognized the importance of a national rural water supply and sanitation strategy and the need for all related agencies to collaborate in the implementation of such a strategy, after its adoption by the government. The participants discussed ways to ensure active participation by all related agencies in the formulation of such a strategy and thus guarantee the success of the subsequent implementation of the strategy;

(d) The participants also focused their discussion on short-term action to be taken on the basis of the knowledge obtained from the workshop.

On the basis of the discussions on the above-mentioned four themes, the participants made the following recommendations:

(a) Coordination between the Centre for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation and the Viet Nam Women's Union in implementing the water supply and sanitation annual development plan should begin in 1997, and the Centre should take the initiative. In order to achieve better coordination, that recommendation should be implemented immediately, and the necessary resources should be mobilized from different sources, including funds for the ongoing projects and external assistance;

(b) Complementary activities that ensured the participation of women in water supply and sanitation projects should be examined in greater detail under a new project to be formulated with a view to improving current project manuals. It was also recommended that, instead of employing a top-down approach in preparing a new guidelines, complementary activities should be identified and tested in pilot projects, and on the basis of the experience gained, synthesis would be made and included in the form of guidelines or project manuals;

(c) Institutional strengthening for agencies working on water supply and sanitation was recommended urgently to support the national programme to reach the target of supplying 80 per cent of the rural population with safe water by the year 2000. It was also recommended that such an institutional programme should be supported by a complementary training programme on the following: (i) strategic study, planning and management; and (ii) programme management in the Centre for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation to enable it to be the focal agency on water supply and sanitation for rural areas. Based on information presented by ESCAP staff members, the participants recognized that the Philippine experience with water supply and sanitation in the fields of institutional arrangements and training, economic and financial management, technology and information could be useful to Viet Nam. A study tour of the Philippines was therefore recommended for senior managers and decision makers as part of the institutional strengthening programme;

(d) It was recommended that non-governmental organizations, both national and international, which were active in water supply and sanitation in the country should be mobilized in the development of the national programme on water supply and sanitation.

D. THAILAND

The participants found that the modules were comprehensive and could be of use to Thailand. However, because of Thailand's high economic growth rate during the preceding two decades and its achievements in water supply and sanitation (practically universal access to sanitation and wide access to water supply), the participants agreed that the modules could be modified to suit the situation of the different regions of the country.

The participants recognized that women, especially in rural areas, wished to participate in community development activities. They wished to be provided with the necessary knowledge on water resources, water quality and environment. It was perceived that women would have a more active role in the management of small-scale water resources projects.

The participants recognized the need to promote the role of women in the Thai community, especially at the local level, for which training needs would have to be identified in detail and strategies devised to meet such needs. The participants also identified two approaches to meet those needs: (a) to enhance the network of agencies and organizations, particularly the National Commission on Women's Affairs, from the central to the local levels; and (b) to focus efforts on the water supply sector and to increase women's empowerment gradually. The participants recommended the second approach.

The participants were aware that a national policy on water resources was being formulated on the basis of the country's 25 river basins. The participants were informed that no concrete role of women had been proposed in the policy. They were also informed that no consolidated study had been made recently on the water resources and water supply sector and that there were no clear mechanisms to link women's participation with the national water resources programmes at the central, organizational or local levels. The participants therefore recommended that a baseline study should be made on the water supply and sanitation sector in the country. They also recommended that a national workshop should be held to discuss a national policy on the involvement of women in the water resources sector for possible incorporation into the national water resources policy.

In view of the complexity of the subject and in order to build on the achievements of the workshop, the participants recommended that a pilot project should be formulated for a number of selected provinces to address the above-mentioned technical issues.

The participants made the following recommendations for follow-up action as a matter of priority:

(a) The National Commission on Women's Affairs should request a budgetary allocation through the National Committee on Water Resources for the holding of a national workshop in 1997 on promoting the role of women in water resources towards a consensus on national policy;

(b) The National Commission on Women's Affairs should formulate and undertake a pilot project on promoting the role of women in water supply and sanitation in selected provinces;

(c) The National Commission on Women's Affairs should solicit assistance from ESCAP and other international organizations to incorporate experiences from other countries into the above-mentioned project and study.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

Apart from the outcomes and findings mentioned in the two previous chapters, the active participation of various international agencies and non-governmental organizations working in the participating countries and in the region have provided an added dimension to the implementation of the project. In view of the new dimension and the recommendations of the national workshops, the following conclusions can be drawn for future reference:

(a) Important achievements in water supply and sanitation in the region as a result of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade warrant heavier emphasis on promoting the role of women in the management of the related infrastructure and in the efficient use of the resources. In this context, any adaptation of the United Nations training modules on women, water supply and sanitation needs to take into account the prevailing practices and the corresponding institutional and legal framework in the particular country;

(b) In response to the increasing attention being paid to the water resources sector for better international strategies in water resources management in the twenty-first century, the formulation of national water resources strategies, including strategies on water supply and sanitation, has been promoted and carried out in several developing countries. In this context, the modules provide good reference materials for these strategy studies, as participants in the workshops have noted. Coordination of efforts, especially among United Nations agencies, could lead to the formation of a driving force for better promotion of the role of women in this sector;

(c) The complexity of coordination for promoting the role of women in the water supply and sanitation sector in practically all the participating countries was a consequence of the low level of cooperation between the agencies responsible for water supply and sanitation on the one hand and the various women's associations and organizations on the other. For better coordination, various mechanisms need to be instituted or strengthened, as recommended by all the national workshops. The active cooperation between the Water Resources Section and the Women in Development Unit of ESCAP provided a parallel example of similar mechanisms in an international organization. Such a mechanism has proved to be an added advantage to project implementation and would need to be strengthened and supported in future work;

(d) Although the conditions in the four participating countries were quite different, the need to adapt the modules was confirmed in all of the countries. Similar conditions are expected in the other developing countries of the region. The findings and recommendations of the national workshops listed in the present report are therefore expected to be relevant and could be used to identify corresponding priority actions for promoting the role and participation of women in the sector.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the achievements of phase I, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) Phase II of the project, which proposes to cover other developing countries in the region, should be implemented in order to consolidate the findings and recommendations of phase I for better strategies at the regional level;
- (b) The international agencies working in the respective participating countries and interested donor countries should provide support to the national projects and activities identified by the respective national workshops to maintain the momentum generated by phase I. This kind of support could also help to coordinate the ongoing activities of these international agencies with the hope of building up a major driving force for promoting the role and participation of women in the water supply and sanitation sector in the region;
- (c) The United Nations training modules should be adapted and made into guidelines and a manual for promoting the role and participation of women in the water supply and sanitation sector in the region.

