



**SOUTH ASIAN CONFERENCE ON SANITATION  
(SACOSAN)**

Dhaka, Bangladesh

21-23 October, 2003

**PROCEEDINGS**

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION**

Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
SACOSAN 2003**

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Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives  
**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

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Hon'able Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, Addressing Closing Ceremony of SACOSAN 2003



Inaugural Ceremony of SACOSAN 2003



Closing Ceremony of SACOSAN 2003

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

### List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFRICASAN	African Conference on Sanitation
AJRs	Annual Joint Reviews
AKPBS	Aga Khan Planning & Building Service, Pakistan
AMCOW	African Ministers Council on Water
BCC	Behavioural Change Communication
BSP	Basic Sanitation Package, Nepal
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCDU	Communication and Capacity Development Unit
CDC	Centre for Disease Control, Afghanistan
CDD	Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases, Nepal
CHAC	Child Health Awareness Committee
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CRSP	Central Rural Sanitation Programme
CtC	Child to Child Approach
CWSSP	Community Water Supply and Sanitation (Pilot) Project -I
DAG	Disadvantaged groups
DALYs	Disability Adjusted Life Years
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DCC	District Coordinating Committees
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DLCC	Divisional Coordinating Committees
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering, Bangladesh
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FRESH	Focus Resources on Effective School Health
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GND	Grama Niladari Division
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNP	Gross National Product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GoI	Government of India
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GWA	Gender and Water Alliance
HDR	Human Development Report
HH	Household
HHE	Health and Hygiene Education
HRD	Human Resource Development
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre, The Netherlands
ITN	International Training Network
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KWSB	Karachi Water and Sewerage Board

LG	Local Government
LGO	Local Government Ordinance, 2001
LGRD&C	Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives, Bangladesh
LGRDD	Local Government & Rural Development Department, Pakistan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIWE	Ministry of Irrigation, Water and Environment, Afghanistan
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOH	Ministry of Health
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Afghanistan
MUD	Ministry of Urban Development, Afghanistan
MWSA	Maldives Water and Sanitation Authority
NaSSeR	Neighbourhood Settled Sewerage, Reed-Bed and Recharge
NCAER	National Council for Applied Economic Research
NDC	National Development Council
NDF	National Development Framework, Afghanistan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	National Plans of Action
NSC	National Steering Committee
NSS	National Sample Survey
NSW	National Sanitation Week
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OPP-RTI	Orangi Pilot Project Research and Technical Institute
PAL	Participatory Action Learning
PC	Production Centre
PCC	Provincial Coordinating Committee
PHED	Public Health Engineering Department, Pakistan
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PLA	Participatory Learning Appraisal
PMC	Project Management Committee
PP&H	Physical Planning and Housing Department
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSDP	Public Sector Development Programme
RGNDWM	Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RSM	Rural Sanitary Mart
RWSSD	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Division
SACOSAN	South Asian Conference on Sanitation
SHG	Self-Help Group
SHIP	School Health Intervention Programme
SLRF	Sanitation Revolving Loan Fund
SOCMOB	Social Mobilization Programme
SRP	Sector Reforms Project
SSA	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
SSHE	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education

SWAP	Sector Wide Approaches
TDPS	Target-Driven Partial Sanitation
TMA	Tehsil Municipal Administration
Triple A	Assessment, Analysis and Action
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
TYPDP	Ten Year Perspective Development Plan
UDC	Urban Development Center
ULCs	Urban Local Councils
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCC	Village Coordinating Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VERC	Village Education Resource Centre
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine
WEDC	Water, Engineering and Development Centre, UK
WESNet	Water, Environment and Sanitation Network
WHO	World Health Organization
WSP	Water and Sanitation Program (World Bank)
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

## Executive Summary

- A total of 301 delegates and guests from nine Country Delegations (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and other local and international organisations, participated in the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN), held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 21 – 23 October 2003. SACOSAN was a high-level conference, with ministerial representation from each of the participating countries. Other delegates also came from the public and private sectors, civil society, external support agencies, academia and the media. All delegates were actively engaged in formulating, advocating or implementing sanitation policy at a managerial or professional level in South Asia.
- SACOSAN was borne out of a shared desire (expressed by the Government of Bangladesh, in partnership with WSSCC, UNICEF, WSP, WHO, DANIDA, DFID, ADB, UNDP, WaterAid, Plan Bangladesh) to prioritise sanitation and hygiene amongst the political and technical target groups working in the region. In many respects, the conference therefore represented an alignment of programme goals for these many organizations.
- The programme for the conference was designed to enable the engagement of both politicians and senior technical professionals from all sectors, focusing on the formulation of policy and mechanisms to implement policy (rather than getting involved in the minutiae of technical details). In this way, the conference retained a strategic, rather than operational focus. The conference structure included an inaugural and closing ceremony (with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh as Chief Guest), along with a number of working sessions where thematic, country and keynote papers were presented.
- The first working session involved four thematic groups on: motivation and collective action; supply and demand; institutional support; and strategies to reach the poorest of the poor. Delegates were asked to vote with their feet and convene in designated rooms for one hour sessions, in which there was usually 1 – 2 presentations, followed by moderated group discussions. There was widespread appreciation of all the presentations. Many of the subsequent discussions were vibrant, resonating with a variety of implications for the Declaration, as well as other future efforts at policy formulation and implementation. The following points represent just a few of the recurring themes that were discussed (they are discussed in detail in Chapter Five of these Proceedings):
  - Governments (especially Local Governments) and NGOs should act as facilitators and catalysts in strategic partnerships for action and change, focussing on user-motivation, enabling-environment-motivation and institutional-motivation, and encouraging proactive engagement of the community itself;
  - The aim should be the elimination of open defecation, as well as good hygiene behaviour, with a focus on understanding/triggering demand and sustained behavioural change. The use of subsidies should therefore be targeted towards software inputs such as promotion;
  - Awareness should focus on making information available both from within the community (and ensuring wider access to decision-making structures) and from outside the community (in relation to understanding a wide review and use of technological options).

- The second working session involved feedback on the core lessons from the above session, as well as a keynote presentation by Mr. Kamal Kar and Mr. Robert Chambers on ‘Subsidy or self-respect?’. Their discussions on Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) indicated that SACOSAN had the potential to become the start of something truly remarkable but because the process was still vulnerable, a rethink about going to scale was still required. For scaling up, they suggested:
  - Multiple approaches adhering to the non-negotiable principles;
  - Continual honest, accurate feedback, learning, adaptation and brainstorming;
  - NGOs to rethink and reinvent themselves as facilitators, trainers and disseminators;
  - Lateral spread with a key role for community consultants/catalysts/facilitators;
  - Governments, lenders and donors to avoid big budgets and restrain pressures to disburse (Low expenditure can indicate participation and success); and
  - Urgency and priority, but patience too. Thickening up will take time but should be exponential.
  
- In their keynote presentation on ‘Gender and Sanitation’, Ms. Rose Lidonde & Mr. Jo Smet argued that Governments should seek to develop or strengthen national policies, participatory methods, tools and curricula, to ensure an increased focus on sanitation and hygiene with specific strategies to respond to gender issues.
  
- Mr. Shekhar Shah and Mr. Junaid Ahmed delivered another keynote on their World Development Report Chapter: ‘Making services work for the poor - Implications for Scaling up Sanitation in South Asia’. In their presentation, they outlined some of the key facets of the WDR that apply to rural sanitation, drawing particular reference to how household subsidies distort community participation, as well as ways to scale up successful total sanitation programmes.
  
- There was an additional working session on ‘Grassroots Voice’, which was designed to outline the Bangladesh experience, as well as encouraging participation from the grassroots level. As such, it was conducted mostly in Bangla, with translation in English. All three presentations focused on the goal of One Hundred Percent Sanitation, with VERC examining the rural perspective and the Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) looking at Urban Slums. There was also a presentation on the Bangladesh Model for Sanitation by the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation.
  
- Country Papers were completed in draft before the conference. They were presented during the conference in blocks of three. The last working session of the conference involved country monitoring groups, in which each of the nine participating Country Delegations sat with a Moderator to review their Country Paper, interpret new lessons from the SACOSAN experience, make necessary refinements/amendments, nominate appropriate persons to monitor progress and commit to a final Plan of Action. The work done in this session will become an essential part of the follow up work for the conference. All finalised Country Papers are included in these Proceedings.
  
- The other key output from the Conference was a Ministerial Declaration on Sanitation. The conference design therefore also included a number of closed parallel discussions on a draft Declaration (prepared and circulated before the event), involving the various technical, diplomatic and administrative heads. There was also a Participatory Session on the Declaration, in which an amended draft of the Declaration was presented to all

Conference Delegates in the Plenary Hall. With sufficient briefing from their Secretaries, the Ministers or Heads of Delegations were able to sit in panel and listen to comments from all Conference Delegates. Finally, there was a Ministerial Roundtable discussion in which the Declaration was finalized and endorsed. A detailed summary on these deliberations is included later in this document, and a copy of ‘The Dhaka Declaration on Sanitation’ is included hereafter.

- Given the Declaration’s commitment to: “sustaining collaborative efforts towards achieving the MDGs in sanitation, through the development of a SACOSAN Inter-Country Working Group...to share information and exchange ideas on progress in countries across the region”, plus the fact that Pakistan and India agreed to host follow-up events in 2005 and 2007, there are a number of implications for the activities that can take place in and between countries, in the lead-up to the next event. Some suggested areas that focus on implementing Country Plans of Action, the political profile of SACOSAN recommendations, and the adoption of SACOSAN recommendations at a strategic level, are outlined in the closing chapter of these Proceedings.

### **The Dhaka Declaration on Sanitation**

1. We, the Heads of Delegation from the 9 countries participating in the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, October 21-23, 2003, which was attended by 4 Ministers, State Ministers, senior civil servants, professionals from sector institutions, academia, civil society, NGOs, Development Partners, and the private sector,

- (1) *recognizing* that, although much has been achieved in last decade, the overall picture of sanitation in South Asia still remains dismal, and the practice of open defecation, unsanitary disposal of human excreta and other unhygienic practices by the majority of people in the region is a serious threat to the quality of life, control of disease and the environment;
- (2) *concerned* that about one million children under the age five in the South Asia region die each year of water and sanitation related diseases;
- (3) *being aware* of the need to pursue common strategies under a common definition of sanitation, to accelerate the progress of good sanitation and hygiene promotion in South Asia in order to improve people’s quality of life and reduce child mortality and morbidity, and fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitments made in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg;
- (4) *recognising* that significant improvements in the situation of sanitation and safe water will have large positive impacts on poverty reduction by increasing health and productivity and therefore should have a central role in country’s poverty reduction strategies;
- (5) *noting* that it is the vulnerable and marginalized population in urban and rural areas that suffer most from minimal access to sanitation facilities;
- (6) *observing* from the experiences of the last two decades that conventional, top-down sanitation programmes driven only by high hardware subsidy have not brought about the desired improvements and sustainability, but that the use of direct and indirect subsidies for software are a must for sustainable sanitation promotion;
- (7) *understanding* that some Government Organizations, NGOs and small-scale private initiatives in generating demand and delivering door-to-door services have demonstrated remarkable achievements of basic sanitation (every household having access to a hygienic latrine and practicing good hygiene);

2. Unanimously agreed that the focus of proper sanitation and hygiene in the region should be based on a paradigm that is: “people centered, community-led, gender-sensitive and demand driven” and that the following principles should facilitate this new paradigm, wherein the thrust:

- (1) Should be on the elimination of open defecation and other unhygienic practices, as well as the promotion of good hygienic practice;
- (2) Should provide hardware subsidies only to the poorest of the poor, who have no means of helping themselves, to be given under appropriate and effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements;
- (3) Should recognize the need for community subsidies for promotion, awareness, capacity-building and the creation of funding mechanisms for scaling up sanitation and hygiene programmes;
- (4) Should focus on understanding and creating demand, sustaining attitudinal and behavioural change and encouraging wider community participation, as opposed to top-down approaches to subsidized sanitation programmes;
- (5) Should consider giving proper and appropriate acknowledgement and rewards to Local Governments and communities demonstrating tangible success in the elimination of open defecation and other unhygienic practices, intensifying advocacy through political and religious leadership;
- (6) Should focus on the hygienic disposal of children’s faeces, other hygienic practices and the development of hygiene education in school and community sanitation programmes;
- (7) Should recognize the need for gender-sensitive programmes;
- (8) Should be on the research and development of a range of viable, locally-appropriate, technological options that should be available at affordable costs;
- (9) Should create an enabling environment for small-scale private providers and innovative technical and financial mechanisms to be mainstreamed to promote better, faster and cheaper service delivery;
- (10) Should encourage Local Governments to engage in strategic partnerships with community based organizations (CBOs), NGOs and other concerned actors, so as to facilitate scaling up of this new paradigm;
- (11) Should recognize the need for special arrangements when dealing with sanitation programmes in conflict and emergency situations;

3. And the Ministers and other Heads of Delegations, on behalf of the delegates at the Conference, committed to accelerating the progress of proper sanitation and hygiene in the South Asia region, by:

- (1) Formulating and implementing national programmes in partnership with all sanitation stakeholders, to raise the profile of sanitation and hygiene in all political and development processes, leading to overall improvements in health;
- (2) Establishing national plans and programmes in partnership with all sanitation stakeholders, particularly through mechanisms like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs);
- (3) Working with other stakeholders to develop broad based alliances and coalitions, sharing and disseminating best practice, monitoring progress and aligning implementation programmes;

- (4) Sustaining collaborative efforts towards achieving the MDGs in sanitation, through the development of a SACOSAN Inter-Country Working Group, to meet annually to share information and exchange ideas on progress in countries across the region;
- (5) Agreeing to organize a SACOSAN meeting to be held every two years (the hosting country will be the coordinating point for Inter-Country Working Group for the period leading up to the next biannual event) with Ministers, Heads of Agencies, development partners and other actors with the potential to introduce and sustain a viable regional cooperation for sanitation, with the first of these events hosted by Pakistan in 2005, and the second hosted by India in 2007.

4. We express our profound appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for successfully hosting this first South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN). We are fully appreciative of the cordial and warm hospitality accorded to us and thank the Government and the People of Bangladesh for the excellent arrangements made for the success of the conference.