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# MAIN POINTS OF THE DISCUSSION PROGRAMME

## ‘SUSTAINABLE SANITATION AND HYGIENE FOR ALL’

Date and Venue: Monday, 19 September 2011, 09.30 - 13.00, Hotel Annapurna, Kathmandu

Organised by: The Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MPPW) of Nepal in collaboration with SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

Participants: Representatives from Government and Non-Government agencies of Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (list attached)

### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In terms of absolute numbers of people, the largest MDG gap world-wide is in access to improved sanitation for rural populations in Asia. In Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bhutan and Nepal alone nearly 58 million rural people lack access to improved sanitation. Considering that much of the achieved progress of the past decade could not be sustained, it is obvious that sustainable solutions for sanitation and hygiene which can be successfully replicated on a large scale are urgently needed.

Starting in 2008, government and non-government partners, development partners, SNV and IRC have closely collaborated in the ‘Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All’ programme in five Asian countries: Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, covering a total of seventeen districts. Last year, this programme was further intensified and expanded with co-funding from the AusAID Civil Society WASH fund.

The discussion programme aimed at sharing results and learning from the ‘Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All’ programme and to discuss the way forward to achieve sustainable sanitation and hygiene on a large scale in the five countries. The sharing and learning event in Kathmandu for a wider audience followed immediately after the Asia Regional workshop on ‘Governance for Rural Sanitation and Hygiene’, conducted in Surkhet, Nepal from 13 – 17 September, represented from above mentioned countries.

This note reflects the key remarks and conclusions of the sharing and learning session of 19 September 2011, following the headings under the programme content.

#### **Programme content**

1. Welcome address
2. Challenges and dilemmas in rural sanitation and hygiene in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
3. Leadership for rural sanitation and hygiene, going beyond ODF
4. Sanitation and Hygiene: Access for all
5. Round table sessions:
  - A Scaling community mobilisation and demand creation for rural sanitation
  - B Private sector engagement and rural sanitation supply chains
  - C Behavioural change communication for hygiene in rural context
  - D Governance for rural sanitation and hygiene
6. Panel discussion: ‘How to achieve Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All’ at scale?
7. Closing remarks

## Highlights

### 1. Welcome address

Mr. Thakur, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works warmly welcomed the participants. He reiterated that a total of almost 58 million people in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam have not access to sanitation & hygiene services. Mr. Thakur complemented the initiators to organise the first ever international workshop in Surkhet, the capital of the Mid-Western Region. This is the region in Nepal with the lowest WASH coverage of Nepal but making remarkable progress. All fifteen districts in the region have prepared 'District Sanitation Plans'; stakeholders have committed themselves to a single approach, resulting from intensive multi-stakeholder consultations, joint declarations and statements. He further expressed his confidence that the international workshop in Surkhet and today's exchange of knowledge and information will contribute to achieving access to sustainable sanitation & hygiene for all in the five countries.

Mr. Sitaula, Secretary of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, expressed his appreciation for the impressive achievements in the Mid West of Nepal and elsewhere as the result of determination of local leadership, multi-stakeholder collaboration and perseverance to put plans into action. He particularly quoted Kalikot District; only 3% of its population had access to a toilet in 2007, increasing to 9% in 2008, 21% in 2009, 36% in 2010 and 52% in May 2011! This clearly shows that rapid improvement is indeed possible. This must be used as a strong example for replicating and scaling up in other regions of Nepal. A strong contributing factor (trigger for change) in the region was the outbreak of a diarrhoea epidemic in 2008. The recently endorsed '*National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan*' includes many of the components already practiced in the Mid West. It serves as a strong guiding tool to enable us reaching MDG targets and our goal to achieve universal coverage in 2017. Nepal is also proud to be the host of the next SACOSAN meeting, to be held in 2013. Mr. Sitaula then headed the oil lamp lighting ceremony to officially open the meeting.

### 2. Challenges and dilemmas in rural sanitation and hygiene in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

The Regional Network Leader of SNV, Ms. Kome presented an overview of the key components of the '*Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All programme*' and the learning so far. She mentioned the following common challenges among the countries: accelerating progress; improve hygienic use; reach different ethnic groups; make toilets affordable and attractive, and support access for the poorest groups in society.

Mr. Ashutosh Tiwari of WaterAid mentioned the importance of improving governance in development. He asked about insight of the sanitation & hygiene programme in working on governance in a situation where elections of local government are not taking place. Interesting, the Mid Western experience has shown that even within this context progress is possible, due to strong and persistent leadership as well as willingness and flexibility of all stakeholders to contribute to a common goal.

### 3. Leadership for rural sanitation and hygiene, going beyond ODF

Mr. Ram Niwas Chaudhary, Regional Director of RMSO/DWSS Mid-Western Region presented the main lessons from the region. The message was that sanitation needs to focus not only on ODF, but also maintain post-ODF behaviour change. Political will, leadership and motivation are essential for increased access to sanitation and hygiene to succeed and sustain. As Mr. Thakur put it; '*In the past sanitation & hygiene was patchwork, many organisations doing many different things, creating small islands of success. In the Mid Western example of decentralized authority, regional leadership has brought all stakeholders together with support from some key agencies. He cautioned that partners should not become parasites of development programmes, meaning to say that development partners should not do more than is actually needed, work under clear decentralized leadership, interfering less than has sometimes been the case*'.

WASH Chief of UNICEF Mr. Andreas Knapp stressed the importance of transforming sanitation & hygiene development into a '*people led social movement*' which is easy to understand and replicate by all. Vertical and horizontal linkages and communication are of crucial importance. Leadership, roles and responsibilities of the lower echelons in the structure, such as VDC and community levels, can be further reinforced with systemic and ongoing support. Areas that, according to him, need more attention are the financing structure and a more coherent capacity building programme in sanitation and hygiene.

### 4. Sanitation and Hygiene: Access for all

Dr. Sijbesma of IRC presented how market-based approaches can help to increase access to sanitation hardware and services for rural households. She explained the different ways in which markets can be strengthened and local private sector can be engaged.

Regional Sanitation Advisor of UNICEF for South Asia Mr. Henk van Norden raised the tension between the pressure to accelerate toilet construction and the need to invest sufficiently in the quality of the social processes, such as popular involvement during the social mobilisation to attain ODF status and during the essential components during and after toilet construction. He cautioned against the human tendency of complacency after an entire settlement, VDC or district has finally been declared 'Free of Open Defecation' (ODF). ODF status is an important achievement but it is only the beginning of sustainable sanitation and hygiene for all.

## 5. Round table sessions

Participants were requested to join the table of their choice. Lively discussion emerged. Results were then presented in plenary.

### A Scaling community mobilisation and demand creation for rural sanitation

Key Questions	Main Points of the Round Table
What are the drivers for (creating) sanitation demand?	In the Mid West, the consequences and media coverage of the diarrhoea outbreak of 2008 have acted as an important trigger for generating political commitment for action at the higher levels and creating demand at the lower levels. Drivers differ per locality, family and family member. Motivations are convenience, illness of children and family members, shame and disgust, prestige and a wish not to ' <i>stay behind</i> ' neighbours and other villagers.
How to do this at scale and how to ensure quality?	Scaling up is possible by creating and sustaining a politically and locally supported mass movement (or <i>people led social movement</i> as mentioned earlier) under unifying leadership at different levels and collaborative action with vertical and horizontal linkages between stakeholders.
How do we reach everyone?	Also in sanitation and hygiene, gaps between awareness, commitment and action do exist. Thus, reaching the last 20% could take much more than 20% of the time investment. For actual and lasting health benefits as the return on investment in sanitation and hygiene it is essential to reach all. A ' <i>carrot and stick</i> ' approach was generally favoured, with the remark that the stick must not violate the freedom of choice of individual families. For those families that cannot possibly afford the time or money to build a toilet in the foreseeable future, a pro-poor support mechanism must be developed, preferably managed by the local authorities.

### B Private sector engagement and rural sanitation supply chains

Key Questions	Main Points of the Round Table
What are the drivers for sanitation supply?	The key driver for supply is demand and on its turn, demand is driven by consumers. Private sector supply can only survive when the costs of producing and delivering sanitation hardware and/or services generates profit. Factors such as market volume, growth prospects, continuity, ease and costs of production and delivery, and last but not least profitability and risks involved are crucial. Ensuring better information to private sector about the emerging demand for sanitation and hygiene related goods and services and providing support for outreach, increases their interest in expanding their businesses into (more remote) rural areas.
What is government's role in strengthening sanitation supply chains?	Government can play a supportive and decisive role by facilitating and coordinating engagement of the private sector, for example through a national forum with business partners or the introduction of a government endorsed tax reduction on key sanitary goods. Cambodia has more experience. The position of the government was that the earlier national subsidy policy for toilet construction has undermined the potential of private sector engagement. Now one-stop-shops have been created (private sector offering the whole range of goods and services for fixed fees).
How to ensure access to affordable goods and	Local producers and service providers can more easily be monitored and held accountable. However, local private actors in remote areas depend on supply of

services in remote communities?	some goods and raw materials from far away markets. With roads largely non-existent or non-accessible during the rainy season, prices fluctuate, and service is a challenge.
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### C Behavioural change communication for hygiene in rural context

Key Questions	Main Points of the Round Table
What are the drivers and motivators for behaviour change?	Traditionally, the main driver or motivator applied used to improve hygienic behaviour was to make people understand the link between direct/indirect contact with faeces and the occurrence of diarrhoeal disease. Posters with drawings and pictures of disease transmission routes and other Information, Education and Communication (IEC) tools were widely used. However, increasingly it is understood that health is neither the only motivator nor the most important one for achieving behaviour change. Also, communication needs to be tailored to specific target groups. FOAM (Focus, Opportunity, Ability and Motivation) was introduced as a framework to help develop communication that goes beyond health motivators.
How to move beyond ODF and encourage safe sustained hygiene practices?	In the urge to rapidly increase toilet coverage and in the context of limited manpower and short time frames, key components to ensure <u>sustainable</u> sanitation and hygiene may tend to be relatively neglected, receiving less attention than required. Unused and/or unhygienic toilets do not serve the purpose for which they were constructed. Keeping the toilet hygienic, hand washing with soap at critical moments and personal hygienic behaviour are equally if not more important. Any intervention must go beyond toilet building and focus on a complete set of quality services ensuring that constructed toilets will last, be cleaned and maintained.
After campaigns, how do we institutionalise?	Ideally, as in the Mid West of Nepal, campaigns are not isolated events but aligned to the national master plan, guidelines, district sanitation strategy plan with defined roles, responsibilities and action plans going beyond campaigns and ODF declaration ceremonies. Local demand creation/triggering campaigns are an important part in the process, with the ODF ceremony and celebrations as an important milestone but not as the ultimate goal. The design of the intervention should include strengthening and preparing local institutions and supporting agencies in ensuring sufficient and adequate ongoing follow up activities post-ODF.

### D Governance for rural sanitation and hygiene

Key Questions	Main Points of the Round Table
What are the drivers for organising and leading sanitation progress?	Nepal is responsible to organise the 2013 SACOSAN meeting and is keen to demonstrate good progress compared to the previous SACOSAN meeting. The updated data on sanitation coverage has triggered an element of competition between regions. If the Mid West can sustain its progress in sanitation coverage it is bound to surpass other regions, unless similar progress in those regions can also be achieved. A similar competitiveness between districts and VDCs can be observed.
How to combine faster progress with sustainability?	Rapid toilet construction without quality services to ensure internalised behaviour change and follow up support will very likely lead to negligible longer term outcomes and impact in the community. The key is finding the balance between achieving physical progress and achieving social, psychological and institutional change, in other words: balancing hardware with software investments and efforts.
How to ensure it enables equitable participation and social inclusion?	Assuring sustainable sanitation and hygiene progress for vulnerable and socially excluded members of society requires tailored solutions sensitive to their specific position and situation. At the same time, these should not undermine local

	solidarity mechanisms and their own capacity for advancement. Testing and disseminating results of tried and ongoing pro-poor solutions will increase multi-stakeholder learning and can eventually lead to common strategies and feasible ways forward.
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## 6. Panel discussion: ‘How to achieve Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All’ at scale?

The international participants see the possibility to apply elements of the example of the approach and progress in Nepal, particularly that of the Mid Western region, in their own countries. The representative from Cambodia mentioned that it is important to identify options for collaborative action on the basis of mapping all sector stakeholders and existing gaps. Representatives from Laos talked about the importance for follow-up for sustainability and the need to build capacity of government staff for follow up and monitoring. Building capacity at community level is the main driver to sustainability. To meet the needs of all people, informed choice of technological and financial options must be provided, especially poor and vulnerable groups.

Mr. Nanda Khanal from SIEU in Nepal recommended to move away from the traditional project approach and follow a programmatic approach in which all stakeholders are organised for joint action to support a mass movement for sanitation. This can be seen as a practical application of a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). Mr. Andreas Knapp from UNICEF Nepal echoed this, saying that the sector needs to inspire and mobilise. Reinforce the bottom with systematic support from above. Clear indicators and monitoring to measure progress and outcomes over time are essential. Also Mr. Thakur mentioned that a strong decentralised people’s movement with some systematic support (facilitating, creating the right conditions) from the centre has the potential to move fast. Need to improve and streamline finance strategy and funding flows.

## 7. Closing remarks

Government and other representatives from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Bhutan expressed their appreciation for the progress they observed during their workshop and field visit in Surkhet, pointing out similarities with challenges they face in their own countries. Regional Director of SNV Mr. Jan Vloet stressed the importance of learning from experience, dissemination of good practices, avoiding mistakes being repeated and continuous growth and development.

Mr. Suman Sharma, Joint Secretary of the MPPW Planning Division, presented the closing remarks of the event. He reiterated that the discussion and sharing meeting has been most fruitful for learning from different international developments and practices, and he thanked the organisers.

Sanitation has clearly become a core element of development in Nepal. From the discussion we had today it is obvious that creating flashes of success is not difficult. The difficulty lies in taking good lessons, examples and approaches to scale. We are already moving into the right direction! The traditional practice of providing subsidies and funds causes interventions to become supply driven and unsustainable at local levels. An environment must be created for private financing, thus becoming a perpetual and self reinforcing motion.

There are many barriers in the process towards sustainable sanitation and hygiene. We need to identify the ‘carriers’ to enable smooth and progressive process and avoid slipping back to old habits. There is no shortage of studies justifying investing in sanitation. Return on sustainable sanitation and hygiene is many times the investment required. Seed funds for local investments can further speed up the process.

The sanitation sector is challenged by moving targets; goal posts and the institutional landscape change over time and we need to be flexible and creative in our interventions and investments. With combined and collaborative efforts of development partners and other stakeholders under clear government leadership and guidance, I am confident that we can cope with these challenges and make sustainable sanitation and hygiene for all a reality for the population of Asia.

## Main speakers

<u>Initial</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Mr	Tulasi Prasad	Sitaula	Secretary MPPW	MPPW
Mr	Suman Prasad	Sharma	Joint Secretary	MPPW
Mr	Gajendra	Thakur	Joint Secretary	MPPW
Mr	Krishna P	Acharya	Director General	DWSS
Mr	Biswo Mani	Gyawali	Deputy Director General	DWSS
Mr	Nanda	Khanal	Head of SIEU	SIEU MPPW
Mr	Ram Niwas	Chaudhary	Regional Director	RMSO Surkhet
Mr	Ashutosh	Tiwari	Country Representative	Water Aid
Mr	Andreas	Knapp	WASH Chief	UNICEF
Mr	Rajendra	Aryal	Chairperson	FEDWASUN
Ms.	Souksakhone	CHANTHACHONE	Deputy Head	NaamSaat, Savannakhet
Mr.	Valin	INTHASONE	Governor	Phalanxai District, Laos
Mr.	Chreay	Pom	Deputy Director	DRHC, Ministry of Rural Development, Cambodia
Dr.	Christine	Sijbesma	Sanitation and Hygiene expert	IRC
Ms.	Antoinette	Kome	WASH advisor	SNV Asia
Mr.	Jan	Vloet	Interim regional director	SNV Asia