

The Sanitation Challenge: Turning Commitment into Reality



WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

UN-Water

The sanitation challenge : turning commitment into reality

1. Sanitation 2. Hygiene 3. Water supply 4. Development
5. Intersectoral cooperation 6. Public policy I. Title.

ISBN 92 4 159162 5

(NLM classification: WA 670)

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Printed in Switzerland

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“We shall not finally defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, or any of the other infectious diseases that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care.”

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General

The provision of sanitation is a key development intervention – without it, ill-health dominates a life without dignity. Simply having access to sanitation increases health, well-being and economic productivity. Inadequate sanitation impacts individuals, households, communities and countries. Despite its importance, achieving real gains in sanitation coverage has been slow. Scaling up and increasing the effectiveness of investments in sanitation need to be accelerated to meet the ambitious targets agreed at Johannesburg.

In response to global demand, this document summarises the key thinking about how these targets can be met. It suggests actions that can be taken at different levels and by different actors to change the pace of sanitation improvement. Achieving the internationally agreed targets for sanitation and hygiene poses a significant challenge to the global community and can only be accomplished if action is taken now. Low-cost, appropriate technologies are available. Effective programme management approaches have been developed. Political will and concerted actions by all stakeholders can improve the lives of millions of people in the immediate future.

Nearly 40% of the world's population (2.4 billion) have no access to hygienic means of personal sanitation (*Figure 1*).¹ Globally, WHO estimates that 1.8 million people die each year from diarrhoeal diseases, 200 million people are infected with schistosomiasis and more than 1 billion people suffer from soil-transmitted helminth infections. A Special Session on Children of the United Nations General Assembly (2002) reported that nearly 5,500 children die every day from diseases caused by contaminated food and water.

Increasing access to sanitation and improving hygienic behaviours are key to reducing this enormous disease burden. In addition, such changes would increase school attendance, especially for girls, and help school children to learn better. They could also have a major effect on the economies of many countries – both rich and poor – and on the empowerment of women. Most of these benefits would accrue in developing nations.

¹ Key information sources: WHO/UNICEF (2000). *Global water supply and sanitation assessment 2000 report*. Geneva, World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund; Prüss A et al (2002). Estimating the burden of disease from water, sanitation, and hygiene at a global level, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110 (5): 537-542.

This document describes the following key areas where action can be taken today to translate global commitments on sanitation and hygiene into reality:

- Making political commitments
- Legislation and regulations
- Building capacity to make a difference
- Getting sanitation and hygiene right
- Mobilising financial resources
- Paying attention to gender and equity
- Supporting small-scale entrepreneurs
- Focusing on youth and using education
- Taking responsibility for the environment
- Monitoring progress
- Making information flow and strengthening partnerships



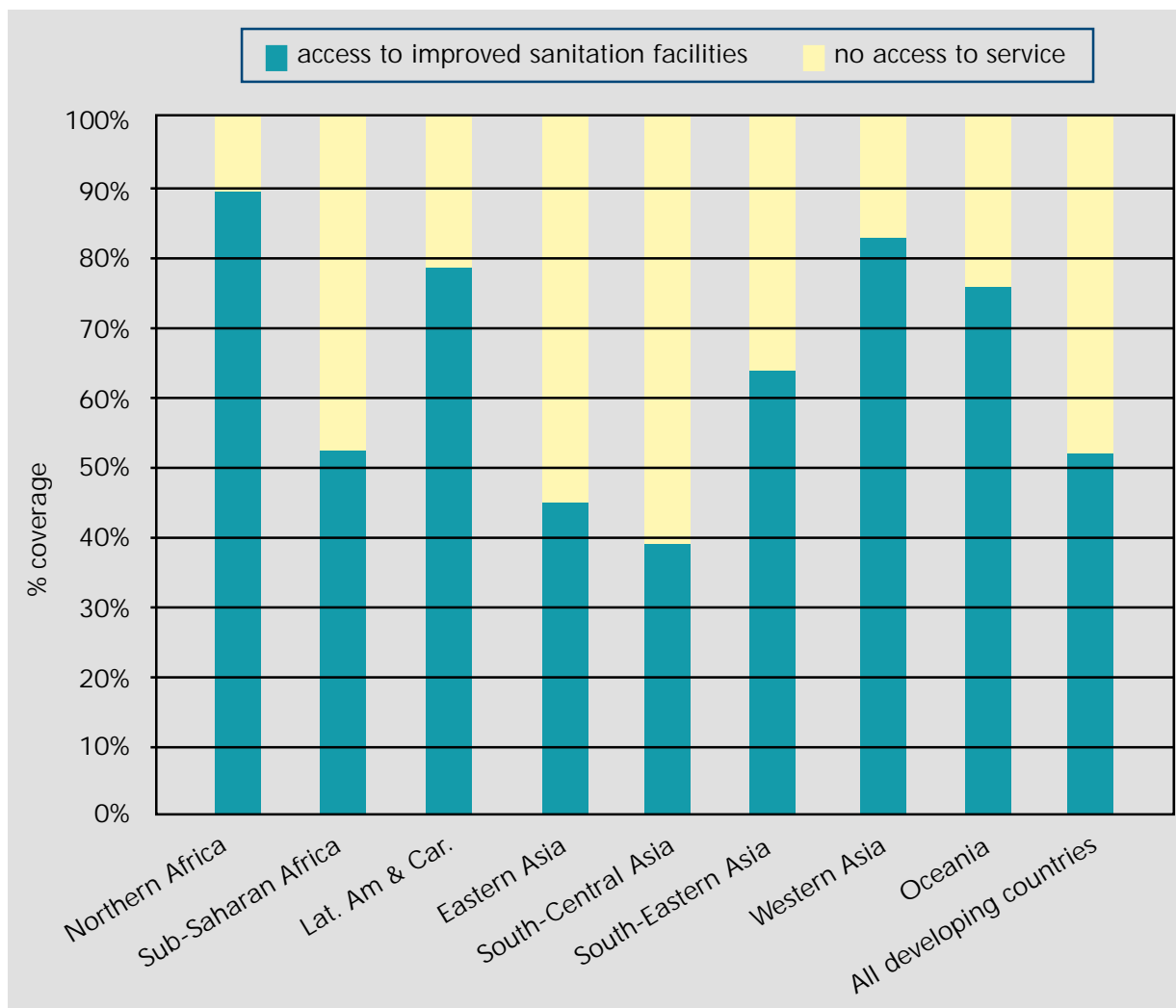
International Development Targets

In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a number of Millennium Development Goals that challenged the global community to reduce poverty and increase the health and well-being of all peoples. In September 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg reaffirmed these goals and added specific targets on sanitation and hygiene.

By including sanitation and hygiene in the Millennium Development Goals and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the global community has acknowledged the importance of promoting sanitation and hygiene as development interventions and has set a series of goals and targets to:

- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation
- Improve sanitation in public institutions, especially schools
- Promote safe hygiene practices
- Promote affordable and socially and culturally acceptable technologies and practices
- Integrate sanitation into water resources management strategies
- Implement plans, national policies and incentives for waste minimisation and improved recycling and use of wastewater
- Develop innovative financing and partnership mechanisms
- Build institutional capacity and develop programmes for waste collection and disposal services for unserved populations; strengthen existing information networks

Figure 1. Access to Improved Sanitation by Region in 2000



Making Political Commitments

Traditionally, “water supply” and “sanitation” appear together as an inseparable concept in public statements; sometimes “hygiene” is also included. Sanitation and hygiene usually disappear, however, when it comes to policy-making, planning, budgeting and implementation. Since the health and environmental benefits of improved sanitation and hygiene are enjoyed by the community at large, there should be genuine public interest in expanding access to sanitation. Yet many feel powerless to act on an issue that is still shrouded in cultural taboos or stigma.

What can we do?

National governments can seriously and visibly act on their commitment to sanitation and hygiene by commissioning a thorough review of policy and institutional arrangements; making explicit budget allocations for sanitation and hygiene programmes to district and local governments; ensuring that sanitation is included in poverty reduction strategies and environmental action plans; funding hygiene promotion and sanitation, training and capacity building; and establishing micro-credit policies and facilities for communities wishing to engage in sanitation initiatives.

District/local governments can contribute to making sanitation and hygiene a reality in local settings by allocating resources to public and school sanitation; hiring sanitation and hygiene specialists; reviewing local planning and technical regulations for opportunities to improve sanitation; and sponsoring hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing.

Communities and civil society can raise the profile of sanitation by lobbying local government for sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes; by offering expertise and support – especially for social mobilisation and hygiene promotion; by finding out what local people really want and making sure that government knows about it; and by being bold – and showing the government what it means to live *without* access to sanitation.

Households can be vocal and active – encouraging local authorities to champion sanitation, adopt good sanitation and hygiene practices and serve as role models for others; seeking ways of acting collectively with neighbours to improve and maintain sanitation facilities; and offering to help with hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing in other locations.

Entrepreneurs can lobby governments for the right to provide sanitation services (where this is not yet the case); find out what sort of sanitation services people want and start developing products; offer financial terms to help people make the needed investments; and let the government know what is happening at the local level.

International organisations, multilateral development banks and bilateral assistance agencies can allocate adequate amounts of money to sanitation and hygiene education programmes and fund micro-credit facilities. Specialised agencies for technical cooperation can compile and disseminate examples of successful programmes and good practice; develop norms and guidelines; and continue informing people at all levels how vital it is for national development to accelerate the implementation of sanitation and hygiene programmes. International organisations can also generate political will for sanitation among regions and countries through the development of regional conventions and protocols; and generate political support by bringing together international and national stakeholders in multi-stakeholder decision-making settings.

We're inspired by...

... the WASH campaign

The WASH campaign is a coalition of concerned people and organisations who believe that sanitation should be high on the development agenda. It has used the broad membership base of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council to promote the idea that hygiene and sanitation are important and should be available to everyone. Council members operate across the globe and in a multitude of forums. As a result, the message has been delivered consistently to all levels of decision-makers.

... political commitment in South Africa

In 1994, the Government of the Republic of South Africa launched a coherent water supply *and sanitation* programme that included policy development, new financial arrangements, organisational reform, decentralisation and implementation. The programming process was led by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). DWAF delivered a significant and intensive infrastructure programme through a variety of organisational partners and a range of institutional arrangements. It allocated more than US\$ 230 million to water and sanitation projects in 2002. The South African National Sanitation Programme has set a goal of providing access to all people in rural, periurban and informal settlements by 2010 – five years faster than the Millennium Development Goals specify. In 2002, sanitation services were provided to an additional 2.4 million people.

... the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

The Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides a forum for supranational consensus building for environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources. This includes addressing sources of pollution (e.g. the discharge of untreated municipal wastewater). Joint discussions at the regional level on how to tackle the root causes of human health and environmental impacts, such as inadequate sanitation, wastewater collection and treatment, further raise political awareness and enhance political commitment to consider both global targets and regional challenges.



Sources: www.wsscc.org; Muller M (2002). *The National Water and Sanitation Programme in South Africa: turning the "right to water" into reality*. Nairobi, Water and Sanitation Program-Africa Region (Field Note 7 in the Blue Gold Series); DWAF (2002). *The development of a sanitation policy and practice in South Africa 2002*. South Africa, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (www.dwaf.gov.za). Elledge MF et al (2002). *Guidelines for the assessment of national sanitation policies*. Arlington, VA, Environmental Health Project; UNEP Regional Seas Programme information available at www.gpa.unep.org

Legislation and Regulations

Creating the right types of legislation/regulations in support of extending sanitation and hygiene services and improving their quality is essential in the process of achieving targets and maintaining achievements. Legislation/regulations should create conditions that favour innovation (both in technology and in financing mechanisms); define cooperation between relevant stakeholders, including the private sector; allocate financial resources to capacity building and training, and to monitoring, implementation and maintenance. Consistent standards for sanitation and hygiene must be set across all other relevant sectors (for example, education, housing construction, workplace safety). Enforcement of enacted legislation/regulations is essential. Effective legislation/regulations will have both incentives for complying and sanctions for not complying with the requirements.

What can we do?

National governments can develop a national sanitation strategy and create the necessary legislation/regulations to advance the strategy; define the roles and responsibilities of different national institutions to implement the law; involve stakeholders at all stages of the process to ensure that the legislation/regulations will be viable and accepted by the public; and create mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing implementation of legislation/regulations.

District/local governments can develop local sanitation and hygiene regulations in consultation with stakeholders; establish standards and norms; inform citizens of their rights and duties under existing sanitation legislation/regulations; and set up mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing their implementation.

Communities and civil society can request specific sanitation and hygiene regulations; participate in legislation and regulation development as stakeholders; and report back to authorities when laws are broken.

Households can learn about their rights and responsibilities under existing sanitation legislation; and demand legislation/regulations from local authorities and help to monitor implementation of sanitation and hygiene legislation and regulations at the local level (e.g. registering complaints with local authorities when legislation/regulations are not adequately implemented).

Entrepreneurs can lobby governments to have their concerns addressed in legislation and regulations; ensure that their products or services comply with legislation/regulations; and let the government know what is happening at the local level.

International organisations can compile and disseminate examples of effective sanitation and hygiene legislation/regulations to interested countries; develop and disseminate evidence-based guidance materials to help countries create an effective legal framework; facilitate the sharing of information through conferences,

workshops and other forums; and assist in building regional consensus on the development and implementation of multilateral agreements, such as rules and regulations in binding conventions and protocols and through voluntary initiatives in the sector.

We're inspired by...

... the right to sanitation in a new draft constitution for Kenya

After two-and-a-half years of consultations with citizens from every region of Kenya, the Constitution Review Commission wrote a new draft constitution for Kenya. The draft constitution contains a defined right with reference to sanitation: "everyone has a right to a reasonable standard of sanitation".

... WHO Guidelines for the safe use of wastewater and excreta in agriculture and aquaculture

WHO published *Guidelines for the safe use of wastewater and excreta in agriculture and aquaculture* in 1989. These guidelines have had a major impact on the rational use of wastewater and excreta in countries worldwide; several countries have used them as the scientific point of departure for developing their own standards. The guidelines emphasise practical approaches to reducing health risks and maximising the beneficial use of scarce resources. The guidelines are currently being revised to incorporate new scientific information and experience since the first edition.



Building Capacity to Make a Difference

Health and environmental programmes in developing countries frequently lack sufficient expertise in the sanitation area. More capacity is needed to reach ambitious international targets; current levels of effort are barely sufficient to maintain the status quo in some regions. Building capacity means bringing together more resources, have stronger institutions, better trained people and improving skills. Unless capacity grows, nothing much will change; some regions will continue to make slow progress and others will see coverage drop in the coming decade.

What can we do?

National governments can recognise that a radical overhaul of organisational structures and institutional arrangements may be needed to ensure that the right people are in the right place to support sanitation and hygiene promotion; allocate money for this overhaul and for training (and retraining) of public sector staff; and establish financial incentives for small-scale private sector development and for the entry of civil society organisations into sanitation and hygiene promotion service delivery.

District/local governments can review the effectiveness of current sanitation programmes and design better and more cost-effective programmes; invest in training staff and finding ways of attracting new skills into the programme; and ensure that entrenched interests are not preventing effective coordination between front-line staff (often from health and education) and technical staff (often in infrastructure ministries or utilities).

Communities and civil society can provide ideas and skills that could change the way sanitation and hygiene promotion services are delivered; contribute to a review of current sanitation and hygiene practices; and start to participate actively in national or local sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes.

Households can participate in training programmes; and teach other members of the community the necessary skills for building, operating and maintaining sanitation facilities and practising good hygiene.

Entrepreneurs can invest in learning more about innovative ways of delivering sanitation; provide ideas about what people want; and speak up about the type of support that would help them to deliver better products or services to households.

International organisations can provide both financial support and information for sanitation and hygiene training programmes; develop and disseminate tools for good practice and guidance; take a critical look at the way sanitation is handled within integrated water resources management, environmental planning and poverty reduction strategies; and promote information sharing, south–south cooperation and mutual support.

We're inspired by...

... the rural environmental sanitation programme in Thailand

For the past 40 years, Thailand's rural environmental sanitation programme has been incorporated into the country's five-year economic and social development plans. According to Luong et al, by 1999, 92% of the rural population had access to improved drinking-water sources, while 98% of rural families had access to improved sanitation facilities. As latrine coverage has increased, mortality related to gastrointestinal diseases has decreased by more than 90%. The programme's success depended crucially upon capacity building: intensive training of project personnel and technical staff at local, central and national levels; and social mobilization and community health education conducted by mobile units and village volunteers. Other key components were the promotion of water-sealed latrines; the provision of supplies, equipment and transport, as well as government-allocated revolving funds for latrine construction; systematic qualitative and quantitative monitoring of progress; awards for achievement; latrines as a residency requirement beginning in 1989; and research and development.

... civil society and community efforts in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh has long been committed to improving sanitation, but recent research by WaterAID showed that, while subsidies (the core of government sanitation policy) gave people the "opportunity" to construct latrines, the generation of the "capacity" to do so lagged behind. The Bangladesh nongovernmental organisation (NGO) Village Education and Resource Centre (VERC) demonstrated that communities acting together can take steps to significantly improve their sanitation situation. Working with VERC, villages developed a range of new approaches to solving sanitation problems, including the design of more than 20 new models for low-cost latrines. VERC's approach unlocks communities' ability to solve problems by themselves.

... AIDIS in Latin America

The Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS) has been working on capacity building in North, Central and South America for many years. With member organisations in 13 countries of the Latin America and Caribbean Region as well as the three countries of North America, the association focuses on capacity building in public health, including water supply, waste collection and treatment, air pollution and toxic waste disposal. Its efforts focus on promoting the technical and professional development of AIDIS members and supporting the exchange of appropriate technologies and practices. In June 2002, national chapters of AIDIS in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Peru) sent representatives on a study tour of the United States to learn about sanitation-related technologies, regulations and current research. In 2003, conferences were held throughout the United States and in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru and Puerto Rico. Each national branch is expected to create a technical division in order to facilitate appropriate technology transfer.



Getting Sanitation and Hygiene Right

Effective sanitation and hygiene programmes need to combine interventions to change behaviour with the selection of the right technology. Changing behaviour requires culturally sensitive and appropriate health education. People need to understand, in terms meaningful to their lifestyles and existing belief systems, why better health depends on the adoption of hygiene practices such as hand-washing (after defecation, after handling babies' faeces, and before cooking), on the use of latrines for safe disposal of faeces, and on safe storage and handling of drinking-water and food. Raising awareness of why sanitation and hygiene are important will often increase motivation to change harmful behaviours. Selecting the right sanitation technology is about having effective alternatives and making the right choice for the specific circumstances. Making the right choice of technology requires an assessment of the costs (both for building the facility and for operations and maintenance) and its effectiveness in a specific setting. For example, it is inappropriate to introduce piped sewage if there is no capacity to adequately treat the effluents. The use of conventional sewerage systems in extremely water-short regions may also be unsustainable.

What can we do?

National governments can ensure that hygiene promotion is funded alongside sanitation in a well-balanced programme. This may mean additional central government support for hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing. National governments can also support reviews of technical norms and standards, of planning regulations and of the health impacts associated with different options; fund research into appropriate technologies; and provide incentives for district/local governments to review their own policies and to innovate. Health education, especially concerning sanitation and hygiene, needs to be added to the national school curricula, and effective school sanitation strategies need to be developed.

District/local governments can provide funds for hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing; fund and support local entrepreneurs and public sector agencies that seek to develop new appropriate technologies; review and revise restrictive planning regulations and technical norms; and promote the use of appropriate sanitation facilities.

Communities and civil society can develop their own local technological solutions; make an effort to find ways of working with local technical agencies; be flexible when it comes to balancing local needs (getting the excreta out of the house) with community needs (protecting the communal environment); and participate in hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing campaigns.

Households can adopt good sanitation and hygiene practices; innovate, take action, talk with neighbours about solving local problems; and encourage local political representatives to support locally developed solutions.

Entrepreneurs can invest in research and development; carry out needs assessments and marketing research; find

out what people are already using and develop better versions; and develop products and services that comply with national and local legislation and regulations.

International organisations can ensure that external funds for sanitation hardware are bundled with appropriate hygiene promotion and sanitation marketing activities; encourage governments to consider appropriate, cheaper or more effective sanitation technologies; finance local sanitation research; develop guidance and tools for facilitating good practice; disseminate information; and actively endorse the idea of flexible technical norms and standards.

We're inspired by...

... the PHAST approach

PHAST stands for participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation. It is an approach designed to promote hygiene behaviours, sanitation improvements and community management of water and sanitation facilities using specifically developed participatory techniques. The underlying basis for the PHAST approach is that no lasting change in people's behaviour will occur without understanding and believing. To summarise the approach, specific participatory activities were developed for community groups to discover for themselves the faecal-oral contamination routes of disease. They then analyse their own hygiene behaviours in the light of this information and plan how to block the contamination routes. PHAST has been successfully field-tested in a number of African countries in both rural and urban settings. The impact on one school in Botswana is presented below.

... PHAST in Botswana

In a school in Botswana, a latrine block had recently been built by the government. Hand-washing facilities were provided, but not soap. Teachers and parents decided that this was not acceptable and created a fund to buy soap dispensers and keep them filled. The majority of parents contributed the small sum necessary to make the improvement. The teachers introduced hand-washing into their teaching, particularly with the youngest pupils, and helped the children to arrange a system of cleaning by rotation to ensure that the latrine blocks stayed clean.

... innovations in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrine – an indigenously developed technology – became the standard technology for low-cost rural sanitation programmes. The VIP, in a variety of guises, has been instrumental in increasing sanitation coverage in many locations in Africa and Asia. Recent successes with the promotion of simple hygiene interventions through community health clubs have led large numbers of poor households in Zimbabwe to adopt safer hygiene practices and has increased demand for sanitation facilities. This has led to a reassessment of the national approach to sanitation and the widespread adoption of an approach based on hygiene promotion.

... condominium sewers in Latin America

In many Latin American countries, urban households expect to connect to a sewerage system. In congested urban slums, this may be the only option, but sewerage is expensive. In Brazil, an alternative approach was developed more than 20 years ago and is now adopted as standard in many cities and towns. Condominial approaches are cheaper to build and operate than conventional systems but have not expanded into neighbouring Latin American countries as fast as could have been expected. In Bolivia, the intervention of an external support agency (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and support from the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) enabled the Government and the private operator in La Paz, El Alto, to experiment with the condominium approach. External support agencies in such cases can provide access to skills (technical or social development skills) and provide funds for activities that perhaps cannot initially be funded from the government's own programme because the rules and approaches being piloted fall outside the existing government rules and standards.

Sources: WHO, UNDP, WSP (1997). *The PHAST initiative: participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation. A new approach to working with communities*. Geneva, World Health Organization; Robinson A (2002). *VIP Latrines in Zimbabwe: from local innovation to global sanitation solution*. Nairobi, Water and Sanitation Program-Africa Region (Field Note 4 in the Blue Gold Series); Sidibe M, Curtis V (2002). *Hygiene promotion in Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe: new approaches to behaviour change*. Nairobi, Water and Sanitation Program-Africa Region (Field Note 7 in the Blue Gold Series); www.wsp.org; Foster V (undated). *Condominial water and sewerage systems – costs of implementation of the model*. Vice Ministry of Basic Services (Government of Bolivia), Water and Sanitation Program, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Mobilising Financial Resources

Improving access to sanitation and changing hygiene behaviours provide large benefits to all members of society that justify the preferential use of financial resources by individuals, households, communities, governments and external agencies to fund sanitation and hygiene interventions. For countries with poor coverage, the focus should be on increasing access. This can be leveraged by steering public funding towards stimulating demand for sanitation and promoting hygienic practices in schools as well as at the household level; financing public and school sanitation services; and delivering targeted subsidies where these can be demonstrated to be effective in increasing access.

Although external support agencies can help with funding, governments will still need to contribute most of the resources to accelerate implementation of sanitation and hygiene programmes. Governments have a responsibility to spend scarce resources in the most cost-effective way, that is, to select programmes or technologies that provide maximum health benefits to the greatest number of people at the lowest cost. Where demand for sanitation exists, people are often willing to commit their own scarce financial and other resources to building sanitation facilities. Providing the right types of incentives, such as matching funds or gifts in-kind (for example, transportation of materials, supplying prefabricated sanitary platforms) may stimulate households or communities to build their own facilities.

What can we do?

National governments can allocate funds to sanitation and hygiene education and ensure their inclusion in poverty alleviation strategies and budgetary allocations; assess the effectiveness of different public spending programmes on increasing access; lobby external support agencies for discretionary terms for financing hygiene promotion and sanitation; provide financial incentives to local and district governments who can deliver efficient and effective sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes; develop and finance micro-credit schemes managed by local NGOs or the private sector to target households; and work with private sector lenders and product manufacturers to create programmes for extending credit to members of the most vulnerable communities.

District/local governments can review the effectiveness of sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes and ensure that funds are not used to finance high-cost, low-impact investments; make subsidy programmes clear and transparent; create incentives to develop new technologies to reduce costs and increase penetration; actively seek to stamp out corruption and waste; create micro-credit and credit guarantee programmes to target households; and provide incentives for local manufacturers to extend credit to the poorest households.

Communities and civil society can scrutinise public accounts and check on reported spending on sanitation and hygiene promotion to help increase accountability and reduce wastage; propose alternative institutional and technical approaches that could reduce costs and ensure that these are well-known and well-publicised; develop micro-credit schemes to fund household sanitation improvements; create synergies between sanitation and hygiene promotion and other developmental activities so that outreach workers can support households efficiently and at low cost; and create mechanisms for generating user fees for funding continuing operation and maintenance of facilities.

Households can find out how subsidised latrine programmes are supposed to work; get together in neighbourhood groups to lobby for subsidised services and then scrutinise progress and spending; complain when subsidies or sanitation programmes in general do not appear to be working as they should; participate in community schemes and/or micro-credit schemes; pay back loans to loan providers; and contribute maintenance fees to user groups.

Entrepreneurs can offer poor households low-interest credit to purchase their products; work with local governments, NGOs and/or banks to develop micro-credit schemes; and develop cost-effective products and services for poor communities and households.

International organisations and external funding agencies can allocate sufficient resources to the sector and mobilise other donors to contribute funds. Specialised agencies can compile and disseminate information on a variety of cost-effective sanitation alternatives and effective behaviour change strategies; and compile and disseminate information on effective programmes for mobilising financial resources, including micro-credit schemes, targeted subsidies and others.

We're inspired by...

... the access revolution in Lesotho

Lesotho has increased sanitation coverage from 20% to approximately 53% over 20 years. During this time, policies have shifted away from subsidising latrines, and much more money is now channelled towards promotion and training. Key aspects include consistent significant allocation of the regular government budget to sanitation and earmarking of these funds for promotion, training local artisans and monitoring. In rural areas, government funds are also used to supply basic latrine components "at cost" to households and to support a 50% subsidy to school sanitation. The government also provides a subsidy through its operation of a loss-making pit-emptying service. No direct subsidies are provided to households. The sanitation budget is mainstreamed at district level in the health budget. While the allocations to sanitation have declined in recent years, the total investments made by households are estimated to range between 3 and 6 times the government contribution.

... effective subsidies in Mozambique

The national sanitation programme in Mozambique received significant funding from external support agencies for subsidised provision of the domed latrine slab. Donor funds accounted for a little more than 50% of the costs of the programme, with users contributing a little less than 40% and the government less than 10%. The ability of the programme to deliver the direct subsidy in a transparent manner and without massive overhead costs appears to have resulted in a cost-effective transfer of resources to households. The subsidies were effective because they were specifically linked to the delivery of the latrine slab, whose cost was the major barrier to many households accessing latrines at all. This understanding, developed through thorough research at the outset of the programme, resulted in a well-designed and targeted subsidy – and consequently an effective programme delivered at scale.

Sources: Pearson I (2002). *The National Sanitation Programme in Lesotho: how political leadership achieved long-term results*. Nairobi, Water and Sanitation Program-Africa Region (Field Note 5 in the Blue Gold Series); Colin J (2002). *The National Sanitation Programme in Mozambique: pioneering peri-urban sanitation*. Nairobi, Water and Sanitation Program-Africa Region (Field Note 9 in the Blue Gold Series); Saywell D (1999). *Sanitation programmes revisited*. London and Loughborough, WELL – Water and Environmental Sanitation (WELL Study Task No. 161).

Paying Attention to Gender and Equity

In most cultures, women have the primary responsibility for water, sanitation and hygiene at the household level. Women play a crucial role in influencing the hygiene behaviours of young children. The effective use of sanitation facilities will therefore depend on the involvement of both women and men in selecting the location and technology of such facilities. It is also essential that facilities are designed to accommodate the special needs of children. The availability of water and sanitary facilities in schools can reduce the likelihood of girls dropping out. The design of the latrine and the location of water points and toilet facilities close to the home can increase women's health and dignity – and ultimately reduce violence against them.

All too often, however, decisions about the design and location of water and sanitary facilities are made without the involvement of users – especially female users.

What can we do?

National governments can frame national policies in a way that enshrines the idea of gender and equity at the centre of sanitation and hygiene promotion; invest in training or retraining front-line staff to work effectively with women, men and children; earmark funds for school sanitation; and commission research to identify where social or economic groups are persistently excluded from access to sanitation.

National governments can ensure that the overall sanitation framework is gender sensitive, by enabling the participation of women in the development of sanitation policy. Gender provisions should address both the practical and strategic needs of men and women, which differ according to culture and traditions, location and other factors, as well as an appropriate strategic approach that takes into consideration these differences. Keeping girls in school ultimately impacts the adoption of healthy sanitation and hygiene practices and significantly reduces infant mortality.

District/local governments can hire front-line staff with skills to work with women, men and children, reorganise public sector institutions to remove internal gender biases and discrimination; invest in school sanitation; and design and implement formative research and capacity building to ensure that the needs and aspiration of all groups are considered in the design of sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes.

Communities and civil society can lobby for better services targeted towards women, men and children; support public sector efforts to improve gender and social development skills; provide information about what all groups in society want; and encourage and build capacity of community-based organisations to engage effectively with public sector programmes.

Households can keep their girl children in school; select user-friendly sanitation facilities for all members of the household (for example, including women and children); and give responsibility for sanitation and hygiene practices to all members of the household.

Entrepreneurs can employ and train female workers to construct products and provide sanitation and hygiene services; and design products that are user-friendly to all members of the household.

International organisations can support and advocate for more gender-sensitive approaches; and compile and disseminate information about how things could be done better.

We're inspired by...

... women masons all over the world

There are abundant cases of female masons working successfully in sanitation, and a number of projects have been designed specifically to build their capacity. Once trained, such women are often well-accepted and make a successful living, although few rise to senior positions on projects. An effective strategy for poor women appears to be the formation of cooperatives that can provide mutual support and help to bridge periods when work is less abundant. Good examples can be found in Bangladesh, India, Jamaica, Kerala, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Tonga and Zimbabwe.

... the Sichiyananda focus village in Zambia

WaterAid started a project in Sichiyananda village in 2001 to improve water supply and sanitation for the village. Rosemary Mande became the Chairperson for hygiene – and a latrine builder. Efforts by Rosemary to promote hygiene and encourage the use and construction of VIP latrines in the village have led to the reduction of diarrhoea in the community. In one year, a team of six latrine builders (three men and three women) built latrines for 28 households in the community. Hygiene promotion continues on a regular basis. Overall, people in the village are more optimistic about their future since the project began.



Supporting Small-scale Entrepreneurs

Since much of the investment in sanitation over the past decade has been at the private household level, the small-scale private provider should be supported in constructing sound sanitation facilities. Local entrepreneurs will continue to prove essential to reaching the millions who are yet to be served, both in rural and urban areas. There are several examples of successful local entrepreneurial efforts on sanitation on all continents that offer opportunities to replicate and expand sanitation programmes in the low-income and rural communities.

What can we do?

National governments can review and modify laws, rules and regulations that constrain small-scale entrepreneurs from working in sanitation; invest in strengthening regulators so that they know how to support, regulate and control small-scale providers; and invest in training and capacity building for small-scale providers.

District/local governments can contract or partner with small-scale providers as part of sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes; provide support and local oversight to maintain the quality and effectiveness of small-scale providers; and focus on monitoring small-scale providers to generate a more realistic assessment of access.

Communities and civil society can provide information to government about the role and importance of small-scale providers; establish local accountability and transparency mechanisms to maintain quality and keep prices down; and lobby local political actors to remove constraints to small-scale providers.

Households can turn their ideas into business opportunities and develop products or supply services to their communities; and support local entrepreneurs by buying their products or services.

Entrepreneurs can find ways of working with government, understanding some of their constraints and seeking constructive dialogue to improve effective working relationships; invest in research to improve products; and form coalitions to self-regulate quality and price and facilitate negotiations with government.

International organisations can help design policies and regulatory frameworks that support the work of small-scale entrepreneurs; publicise their role; and participate in programmes that support them.

We're inspired by...

... public toilets in South Asia

The Sulabh sanitation project in India operates nationwide sanitation services and has grown into a formal private operator. The municipal corporations in Hyderabad (population 5.2 million in 2001) and in Vijayawada (population 1 million in 2001) have entered into arrangements with Sulabh to supply pay toilets and/or subsidised toilets, which have been particularly effective in public places such as markets and bus and railway stations.

... the programme for rural sanitation in Guinea

In Guinea, West Africa, the 1999 Demographic and Health Survey found that 5% of the population had acceptable sanitation, while 51% had no access to latrines. The programme for rural sanitation in Upper and Middle Guinea has brought about dramatic improvements in terms of family latrines and public latrines. Large improvements at the household level became possible in 1997, with the introduction of sanitary platform latrines provided to some 1.5 million people (20% of the population). An evaluation carried out in 2000 led to training of community leaders and rural authorities on the necessity of hygienic latrines and sanitary practices, and training of village masons on how to build latrines. The rural authorities handle local management. A water quality survey in 2000 found 69% of samples entirely free of coliform bacteria, compared with 48% in 1998. Significant improvements in standards of living have been possible with simple sanitation improvements.

...commercial operators in Africa

In many African countries, services such as pit and septic-tank emptying are often undertaken by small private contractors. Governments have found a variety of ways of regulating performance, but more work is needed to improve the capacity of local governments to partner with small-scale providers.

... the UN-HABITAT Vacutug machine

UN-HABITAT and Manus Coffey Associates designed a machine to provide sanitation services for the residents of densely populated, low-income settlements to remove the human waste from pit latrines. Known as the UN-HABITAT Vacutug, it is engineered for access to pit latrines in the narrow, unpaved streets of poverty stricken slum settlements where larger removal vehicles cannot pass. The use of the Vacutug is being tested in several countries. Initial studies indicate that there is substantial demand for the product and that it would be profitable for small-scale entrepreneurs to build and operate in the areas where it was tested. Development of the Vacutug shows that international intergovernmental organisations can work with small-scale entrepreneurs to develop innovative sanitation technologies.



Focusing on Youth and Using Education

Well-designed education programmes to demonstrate the link between sanitation, hygiene, health and economic development can contribute to increasing demand for improved sanitation. Hygiene promotion campaigns are most effective among younger populations, and students can be targeted both as beneficiaries and as agents of behavioural change within their families and their communities. Hygiene education should be included in school curricula, together with the provision and maintenance of sanitation facilities at school premises. These are essential elements of marketing campaigns in schools.

Providing separate sanitation facilities at schools for boys and girls can help to keep girls in school longer. The long-term benefits of education – especially for women – are well understood. Educated mothers are more likely to adopt healthy hygiene and sanitation behaviours – and consequently have lower infant mortality rates in their households.

The increased interest in water, sanitation and hygiene in schools to contribute to a safe and healthy learning environment is a positive development. Special steps must be taken to accelerate and coordinate progress on water, sanitation and hygiene programmes in schools.

What can we do?

National governments can invest in sanitation in schools; pay for training of teachers to deliver effective hygiene education; create incentives for schools to do more in-house; fund national education and awareness campaigns aimed at children and young people; and create legislation to require schools to provide separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.

District/local governments can invest in sanitation in schools; find ways to use the expertise of health and infrastructure professionals in the education department; and create incentives for schools and teachers who improve sanitation access or deliver effective hygiene promotion.

Communities and civil society can actively support schools in their efforts to improve sanitation and hygiene; campaign for more public funds for sanitation and hygiene promotion; create connections between social organisations focusing on youth and those that focus on health; and endorse and further reinforce hygiene messages delivered in schools.

Households can lobby schools for better sanitation facilities and hygiene education; keep their children in school (both boys and girls); use good sanitation and hygiene practices in the home; and can find ways of raising resources to support schools in this effort.

Entrepreneurs can provide free or subsidised services in schools in their own communities (this will not only have a direct positive impact on children's health; it will also increase demand for sanitation in the house); and endorse and reinforce hygiene messages delivered in schools.

International organisations can improve the coordination and common understanding between education and public health professionals and programmes within international organisations; and compile and disseminate sanitation and teaching materials.

We're inspired by...

... UNICEF

During the past decade, school sanitation and hygiene education has been an integral part of more than 72 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) country programmes. Since 2000, UNICEF has been actively promoting two major school sanitation and hygiene education projects: a pilot project in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Viet Nam and Zambia focusing on the development of approaches to promote life skills, a healthy and safe school environment and outreach to families and communities; and a project focusing on school sanitation and hygiene education issues in specific states of India. All these efforts are supported by the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre. More information is available at <http://www2.irc.nl/sshe>

... FRESH

FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health), an initiative of WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, aims to create an environment in schools and in basic education programmes in which children are both able and enabled to learn. The four components of the FRESH framework for action are: health-related school policies, provision of safe water and sanitation, skills-based health education, and school-based health and nutrition services. FRESH advocates three types of supporting activities: effective partnerships between teachers and health workers and between the education and health sectors, effective community partnerships, and pupil awareness and participation. More information is available at <http://www.freshschools.org/>

... HECA

WHO, together with various partners, established a global alliance to tackle environmental threats to children's health, including inadequate sanitation and hygiene. Through advocacy and information sharing, the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) aims to raise awareness, with the goal of informing and influencing policy- and decision-makers on effective measures for protecting and promoting healthy environments for children. One of the key areas of focus is creating healthy settings in schools, including the provision of separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls. More information is available at <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>

... hygiene and sanitation education in Nepal

In Nepal, hygiene and sanitation messages are incorporated in the school curriculum on health education. Since it was felt that regular practice is needed in order to make sanitation education more meaningful, a sanitation package was developed to facilitate the design and implementation of a sanitation programme at primary-school level. It has five major components: habit formation and hygiene and sanitation education for students, construction of sanitary facilities at school, use and maintenance of these facilities, organising extracurricular activities and events, and a school-to-community programme. Teachers are encouraged to reinforce discussions by practical demonstrations, repetition of messages during prayer sessions and sport events, on-the-spot correction of unsanitary practices and stimulating the use of sanitary facilities such as latrines and garbage pits.



Taking Responsibility for the Environment

Human well-being requires a healthy environment. Inadequate sanitation practices negatively impact the environment. For poor families living in congested urban slums and in villages, the lack of any sanitation facility means that waste lies on the streets, clogs the drains and creates an immediate local hazard – as well as creating optimum conditions for the growth of disease vectors. Waterborne sewage uses scarce freshwater resources and may contaminate surface waters when it is discharged into the environment without adequate treatment – thus endangering downstream users and aquatic resources.

Finding technologies that safeguard the environment and maximise the potential of waste products to be reused at the local level will have a major impact on the long-term sustainability of sanitation systems and processes. Ecologically sustainable technologies have been widely promoted within the development community. The benefits of these systems are that they use little water, they treat the wastes and they facilitate the beneficial use of scarce resources. The carefully managed use of wastewater in agriculture and in other applications also has environmental and health benefits.

What can we do?

National governments can finance public-good elements of sanitation, including wastewater treatment where needed; create incentives for local government to minimise water use through reuse and responsible planning and management; finance research into environmentally improved technologies and approaches; finance water quality surveillance and environmental monitoring; establish the framework and procedures for health impact assessment (HIA) of development projects, with sanitation as a key safeguard; and provide adequate funds to environmental regulators to ensure that they have the capacity to make sound judgements about the balance of local and wider environmental sanitation needs.

District/local governments can find innovative ways of balancing and delivering local sanitation and environmental management; create incentives for communities and industries to improve protection of water sources at the local level; and establish mechanisms to fund and implement wastewater treatment.

Communities and civil society can identify and propose new approaches that would maximise safe reuse and minimise environmental hazards; educate and promote the idea of wider environmental management; support government efforts to balance local needs with wider environmental concerns; and champion the needs of the unserved.

Households can develop local ideas and solutions, where appropriate, that may improve safety and environmental practices; and adopt safe, environmentally-friendly household sanitation technologies.

Entrepreneurs can invest in research and development of better sanitation technologies that minimise environmental impacts and long-term negative effects.

International organisations can compile and disseminate information on safe and environmentally-friendly sanitation practices; and coordinate health and environmental impact assessments prior to implementation of development programmes. Multilateral development banks and bilateral donors can provide funding for appropriate wastewater treatment technologies.

We're inspired by...

... GPA

The direct relationship between poor sanitation services and the marine environment has been recognised and addressed by the United Nations system through the establishment of the Global Program of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). Overseen by UNEP, and including WHO, UNDP, FAO, GEF, IAEA, IMO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WMO and the World Bank as partners, GPA has provided a framework for governments to plan and implement coordinated actions to prevent land-based pollution from reaching and adversely affecting estuarine and coastal ecosystems. At Johannesburg, the centrality of this initiative was recognised with a call to "achieve substantial progress to protect the marine environment from land-based activities by the next GPA intergovernmental review in 2006 ... with particular emphasis on municipal wastewater". Under the GPA's Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater, UNEP, WHO, HABITAT and WSSCC jointly developed ten keys for local and national action, and associated guidelines on municipal wastewater management, as well as a training module on the same subject.

... ecological sanitation in San Luis Beltrán in Mexico

In this periurban barrio in Oaxaca, Mexico, dry toilets with urine diversion have become a universal sight; whereas in the late 1980s, when the idea was first introduced, the population was keener to have a waterborne sewerage system. The local committee was convinced that the system would work after they saw 35 demonstration units working well. Technical inputs from a national NGO and support from the Ministry of Public Works was instrumental in getting the programme off the ground. While some health concerns persist around the safety of "ecological" toilets, they clearly represent an important avenue for continued monitoring and research.

... the UN-HABITAT Water for African Cities Programme

UN-HABITAT's Water for African Cities Programme was the first comprehensive effort to improve water and sanitation management in African cities. UN-HABITAT and UNEP initiated this programme in 1999. The World Bank, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Finland supported the programme in subsequent years. Within a short time, the initiative made a significant impact in seven African cities through its awareness campaigns, advocacy and educational initiatives. With a strong demand-side focus, a flexible framework for regional cooperation and interagency collaboration was established. The programme supports practical demonstrations in the areas of water demand management, protection of water resources from the impacts of urbanisation and improved information and awareness on key water and sanitation issues. It has demonstrated the possibility of conserving water resources and has developed new management approaches to local catchment management. The project activities have addressed novel approaches to urban sanitation and, in particular, unblocking the constraints to successful scale-up and replication.

Sources: UNEP/WHO/HABITAT/WSSCC (2004). *Guidelines on municipal wastewater management*. The Hague, United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO/IHE (2004). *Training manual on improving municipal wastewater management in coastal cities*. The Hague, United Nations Environment Programme (www.gpa.unep.org); Esrey SA et al, eds (1998). *Ecological sanitation*. Stockholm, Swedish International Cooperation Agency; Water for African Cities Programme information available at <http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/water/>

Monitoring Progress

Sanitation and hygiene are challenges that will not go away overnight. Over time, new ideas and approaches will emerge and old ideas will be improved. Gradually, the balance will shift until good hygiene and access to sanitation become the accepted norm all over the world. For this to happen, it will be important to keep track of what is happening, monitor progress, explore how new ideas are impacting on access and evaluate whether things are really improving for households. While global estimates of coverage will remain important, local capacity to generate *and use* information will be a vital part of the monitoring effort.

What can we do?


National governments can finance monitoring systems at the local and national level; invest in training to build capacity for participatory monitoring and evaluation; ensure that sanitation and hygiene data are built into national systems of data collection; provide input and data to the WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme; use monitoring data to define priorities and improve national policies and practices; and actively support the use and dissemination of better information at local and national level.

District/local governments can invest in improved local monitoring and evaluation; be open and confident about information; work with communities and civil society to improve local data collection; and actively share information and data.

Communities and civil society can participate in better monitoring and evaluation; provide skills and support to public monitoring processes; recognise that many governments are unused to working with the public in participatory monitoring and evaluation, and support their learning process; actively publicise and make information available both to government and to communities; and, where public systems are not working, lobby for them to be improved, and provide alternative data if possible.

Households can participate in monitoring efforts by providing information to data collectors.

Entrepreneurs can invest in monitoring and evaluation services and skills and offer to subcontract and provide services; and supply information on products sold or services rendered within their communities.

International organisations can support better monitoring and evaluation; encourage training at the local level; monitor global trends; and promote coordination and partnership between social sector monitoring systems. 

We're inspired by...

... JMP

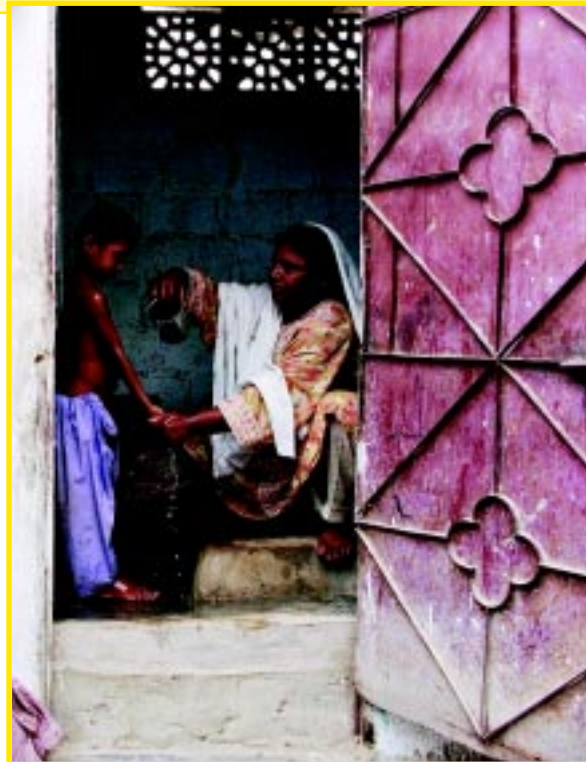
At the end of the international drinking-water supply and sanitation decade (1981–1990), WHO and UNICEF established a Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP). JMP's overall aim is to report globally on the status of water supply and sanitation and to support countries in improving their monitoring capacity to enable better planning and management at the country level. The JMP is the official arrangement within the United Nations system to produce information on the progress of achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to water supply and sanitation. Future efforts to improve the utility of monitoring data will incorporate triangulated data on access, latrine use, wastewater treatment, hygiene behaviours, expenditures in the sector and outcomes at the local level.

...the GEMS/Water programme

The GEMS/Water programme of UNEP a global water quality monitoring and assessment programme, provides information on the state and trends of global inland water quality. The programme works with more than 100 partner countries and counterparts within and outside the United Nations system to build capacity in developing countries for collecting and managing information on water quality. GEMS/Water has recently broadened the scope of its data to cover parameters related to wastewater and sanitation, including metals, persistent organic pollutants, waterborne pathogens and micropollutants.

... civil society monitoring efforts all over the world

Throughout the world, civil society struggles to present the real picture of what is happening at the local level, confronted by often inflexible national or local systems of "official" reporting. These efforts should be recognised for what they are: solid support for empowerment and the right of all people to participate in a real process of local change.



Making Information Flow; Strengthening Partnerships

Good information on sanitation and hygiene is essential for making the right decisions. Getting the most useful information to flow from those who produce it to the people who use it is the challenge. There are several types of relevant information: there is technical information for practitioners/professionals, there is right to know/public participation information (that includes the rights and responsibilities of citizens under legislation and regulations) and there is user data collected for monitoring purposes. The Internet and e-mail are rapidly increasing access to information throughout the world, even in many poor or remote communities. To complement these new electronic methods for disseminating information, broadcast media and printed materials are still needed to reach the most inaccessible audiences. Traditional approaches to informing people, such as drama competitions and songs, have been used in many settings and have been shown to be effective.

Addressing the sanitation and hygiene crisis requires a global strategy that builds partnerships between national governments, external support agencies, NGOs, communities and households and the private sector. Increased sharing of information resources between agencies and organisations through partnerships will help to reduce duplicative efforts, to learn from past mistakes and to consolidate effective approaches. Partnerships are vital for leveraging scarce resources.

What can we do?

National governments can emphasise the importance of sanitation and hygiene programmes to their national development through poverty reduction strategy papers and by otherwise reaching out to external aid agencies to create partnerships; work to increase the interagency flow of information by creating information exchange forums among different national entities (for example, ministries of environment and ministries of health); and make sanitation and hygiene information available to all.

District/local governments can work with national agencies, NGOs and entrepreneurs to develop partnerships at the local level; make information on sanitation and hygiene (including local regulations) available to all; and help to select villages for pilot projects.

Communities and civil society can participate with various partners to implement sanitation and hygiene projects; disseminate sanitation and hygiene information to communities and households; create libraries or information resource centres with sanitation and hygiene information (for example, a library with an Internet connection or computer with CD-Rom).

Households can participate in local sanitation and hygiene programmes; and request information on sanitation and hygiene from various agencies and partnerships.

Entrepreneurs can work together as partners to develop appropriate sanitation and hygiene technologies and services; and make information available on available products and services.

International organisations must learn to recognise each others strengths and weaknesses; find ways of working together that maximise use of shared skills and interests; develop and disseminate information; and focus efforts on achieving a common vision and goal – and hold this goal at the forefront of efforts to make sanitation and hygiene a reality for people all over the world.

We're inspired by...

... children's fairs in Gujarat, India

In Gujarat, teachers organise and run children's fairs in villages in the Santalpur region. Over two days, 80-200 children from local villages attend the fairs. Activities include a village rally or clean-up where children shout out health slogans; participatory activities to illustrate different sanitation and hygiene issues; cultural shows at night (including puppet shows) where children and teachers participate in skits or song and dance sequences that incorporate health messages; and writing action plans for their own villages. More than 200 teachers have participated in 20 children's fairs. Teachers who participated in the fairs felt that their abilities to communicate health issues associated with sanitation and hygiene had improved.

... the Sanitation Connection (www.sanicon.net)

Sanitation Connection is the leading Internet-based information resource on sanitation and is managed as a partnership through WHO, WSP, WSSCC, UNEP/GPA and IWA (International Water Association). The web site gives access to accurate, reliable and up-to-date information on technologies, institutions and financing of sanitation systems around the world. Institutions of international standing contribute to the information base by providing and maintaining a topic of their specialisation. Each month, thousands of users from all over the world enter the site to obtain the best available information on sanitation and hygiene and to link to other sites.



... UN-Water

Twenty-four United Nations agencies have significant activities involving water (and often, but not always, sanitation and hygiene). Each agency has traditionally planned and implemented its own activities concerning water, with little coordination of activities between different agencies. This often resulted in the duplication of water-related activities and, in some cases, the development of contradictory information. UN Water was created as a forum for sharing information and fostering partnerships between the different agencies to more effectively implement water-related programmes.



Conclusion

Providing adequate sanitation will have profound implications for human health and poverty alleviation. The global community has set ambitious targets for improving access to sanitation by 2015. Achieving these goals will have a dramatic impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of the world's poorest people and will open the door to further economic development for tens of thousands of communities. Access to adequate sanitation literally signifies crossing the most critical barrier to a life of dignity and fulfilment of basic needs.

The 12th meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development provides a key forum to discuss actions that governments must take to turn commitments on sanitation and hygiene into reality. This document provides examples of essential steps that national and local governments must take now to improve sanitation and hygiene coverage. Real progress requires concerted efforts from all actors – national and local governments; communities; households; entrepreneurs; and international organisations – all working together to achieve the internationally agreed goals and targets. Small steps can lead to big changes. Change starts with political will and the desire to improve peoples' lives. The time to act is now!

In December 2003, the United Nations System created UN-Water as the interagency coordinating mechanism for water-related activities. This report – produced by WHO, UNDESA, UNICEF, HABITAT and UNEP/GPA – is a product of that coordination.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photo Library, Water and Sanitation Program and
WHO Photo Library

The valuable inputs and contributions of WHO, UNDESA, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT and UNEP/GPA staff are gratefully acknowledged. The publication of this document was made possible through financial support from WHO and UNDESA.

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ISBN 92 4 159162 5



Achieving the internationally agreed targets for sanitation and hygiene poses a significant challenge to the global community and can only be accomplished if action is taken now. Low-cost, appropriate technologies are available. Effective programme management approaches have been developed. Political will and concerted actions by all stakeholders can improve the lives of millions of people in the immediate future. This document suggests actions that can be taken at different levels and by different actors to change the pace of sanitation improvement.