



*“Sanitation enhances quality of life”*

## National Workshop on 4th South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV)



**O**n behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Water Supply & Drainage is leading the process of organizing the Fourth South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV) in Sri Lanka. The first regional cooperation meeting on sanitation in the SAARC countries was held in Dhaka Bangladesh in 2003. SACOSAN is a platform for dialogue and influence to address sanitation challenges in meeting the region's sanitation targets related to the United Nations declared Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

SACOSAN IV will be held in **Colombo from 4 - 8 April 2011**. An inter-agency National Steering Committee headed by the Secretary to the Ministry is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the Conference.

### **Sanitation**

In the context of SACOSAN IV, the focus will be on the safe disposal of human excreta. The World Health Organization has deemed that the absence of hygienic behaviour and lack of access to safe sanitation facilities and services is a major cause of disease world-wide. Improving sanitation is known to have significant health benefits and social impacts on both household and across communities.

*Sanitation is achievable  
Sanitation is vital for health  
Sanitation is a good economic investment  
Sanitation contributes to social development  
Sanitation helps the environment*





### Workshops for Mobilizing Stakeholders

To raise awareness on the Conference and for mobilizing effort as needed, a series of workshops will be conducted in Colombo and at the provincial level. The first of these will be organized by the SACOSAN Secretariat and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board, in collaboration with the Centre for Environmental Justice and others. It is expected to mobilize support of several other civil society organizations for the rest of the workshops. The provincial level workshops will be held in Kandy, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Matara and Badulla in the coming months.

The Ministry of Water Supply & Drainage plays a major role in achieving targets for sanitation particularly in the urban sector. There are many others associated in the rural sector. The Ministry of Health plays a regulatory role in monitoring the standards of sanitation facilities through mobilizing public health officers. The Health Education Bureau of the Ministry of Health has the mandate for hygiene and health education. Local government agencies have an important role in ensuring that communities have adequate access to safe sanitation. The workshop is a platform for all stakeholders in the sanitation sector to raise issues and share responsibility towards bridging the gap in environmental sanitation, in their respective areas. In addition the workshop will provide an opportunity for major stakeholders comprising of line Ministries, local government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and the media to receive an update on the objectives of the conference and discuss their respective roles and responsibilities.

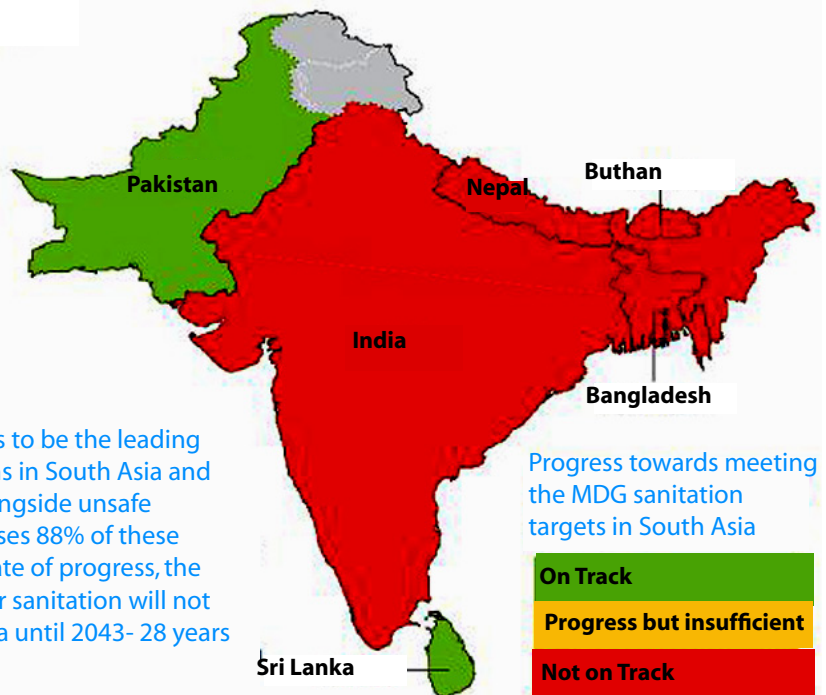
### Why SACOSANs ?

Potable Water and safe Sanitation are two sides of a coin. Access to safe and affordable water is a basic right. Sanitation is fundamental to personal hygiene and for maintaining a clean environment within households which is vital for family health.

About 39% of the world's population which is over 2.6 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities, which is far short of achieving the MDGs for sanitation. According to the WHO if the current trend continues unchanged, many countries will miss the target set out for sanitation by 2015.

**Globally, 1.2 billion people practise open defecation, of which South Asia accounts for 778 million or two thirds.**

### Who are unserved?



Diarrhoea continues to be the leading cause of child deaths in South Asia and poor sanitation- alongside unsafe drinking water- causes 88% of these deaths. At current rate of progress, the 2015 MDG target for sanitation will not be met in South Asia until 2043- 28 years too late."

Progress towards meeting the MDG sanitation targets in South Asia





Open defecation practised by a large population in Asia and Africa presents the greatest risk in spreading diseases and pollution of water. Although open defecation is on the decline worldwide, the practice is still widespread in South Asia, where an estimated 44% of the population defecates in the open. Globally, 1.2 billion people practise open defecation, of which South Asia accounts for 778 million or two thirds. Although the problem still exists in Sri Lanka to a lesser degree, there are no official figures available. SACOSANS will create a consciousness among the people who practise open defecation and encourage them to improve their living standards and dignity by using a toilet.

Rural areas are lagging behind in access to improved drinking water and sanitation facilities globally. Seven out of ten people without access to basic sanitation are rural inhabitants and more than eight out of ten people without access to improved drinking water sources, live in rural areas of Asia and Africa. Although Sri Lanka has a better record in the access to water and sanitation, still there are challenges in reducing open defecation to zero, safe disposal of excreta and provision of public toilets including school toilets to an acceptable standard.

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**The Delhi declaration, recognizes that access to Sanitation and Safe Drinking Water is a basic right, and accordingly that national priority to sanitation is imperative.**

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### **Message**

- Sanitation is fundamental to personal hygiene and maintaining a clean environment within households for a healthy family.
- Sanitation means- maintaining a hygienic environment to protect public health. Improved sanitation means, 'Using a toilet with an environmentally acceptable disposal system'.
- Adequate sanitation means 'using a toilet to minimize health impacts'.
- Access to sanitation is vital for ensuring health, dignity and sustainable social and economic development for the world's poorest citizens.
- House hold sanitation is achieved through using a toilet with a proper substructure to dispose excreta in order to protect the living environment and ground water,.
- Hand washing after - using a toilet is an important aspect of sanitation to maintain personal and family health.
- Hygiene education and behaviour change are key to sustainable sanitation.

All previous SACOSANS (Dhaka-2003, Islamabad-2006 and Delhi-2008) asserted that achieving total and sustainable sanitation in all rural and urban communities in their countries is not only possible but also is their cherished goal. The Delhi Declaration in particular recognized that access to safe sanitation and drinking water is a basic right, and accordingly that national priority to sanitation is imperative. This affirms their commitment to achieving National and Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) on Sanitation in a time bound manner in all participating countries in South Asia. A complete copy of the Delhi Declaration can be obtained from the organizers.

### **Civil Society Organizations on Sanitation**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engaged in assisting water and sanitation needs of the communities are very much part of the process. One year after the Delhi Declaration and one year before SACOSAN IV, South Asian CSOs and networks led by the Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA), Wateraid, and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) organized a civil society conference in November 2009 in Negombo to assess the progress of the implementation of SACOSAN Road Map which was agreed during SACOSAN III held in Delhi in 2008. Civil Society Organizations continue to assist with organizing the SACOSAN IV Conference.





### **National Steering Committee for the Conference**

*The SACOSAN IV Secretariat, Ministry of Water Supply & Drainage, No 34, Narahenpita Road, Nawala*

*Ministry of Water Supply & Drainage, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Councils, Ministry of Finance & Planning, Ministry of Mass Media and Information, Ministry of Environment, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Community Water Supply and Sanitation project, National Planning Department, University of Moratuwa, Open University of Sri Lanka, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, World Bank, Plan International, Practical Action, Sri Lanka Initiative on Resource Centres for Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (SRIWASH), Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum, Energy Forum and Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ)*

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### **For more information**

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