



Environment

Water Community



Solution Exchange for the Water Community Consolidated Reply

Query: Developing the SACOSAN III Declaration - Advice

Compiled by [Nitya Jacob](#), Resource Person and [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

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From [Lizette Burgers](#), UNICEF, New Delhi

Posted 20 October 2008

The South Asia Conferences on Sanitation (SACOSAN) are high-powered regional ministerial conferences that discuss sanitation. They help develop a regional agenda on sanitation, enable learning from experiences and plans for the future. The objectives are to accelerate sanitation and hygiene coverage, and enhance peoples' quality of life in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 1992. Till date, two conferences have been held at Bangladesh (2003) and Pakistan (2006).

The third is being organized in New Delhi on 16-21 November 2008, by the Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (<http://ddws.gov.in/infosacosan/Home.aspx>). The overarching theme of the Conference is "Sanitation for Dignity and Health", and the sub-themes of the conference are:

- (i) Sanitation and Sustainability
- (ii) Sanitation and Development
- (iii) Sanitation Beyond Toilets
- (iv) Institutions and Partnerships for Sanitation

Members can view the declarations from the Islamabad SACOSAN II at http://ddws.gov.in/infosacosan/Islamabad_Declaration%202006.pdf and the Dhaka SACOCAN I at http://ddws.gov.in/infosacosan/Dhaka_%20Declaration2003.pdf.

The Department is in the process of drafting the Declaration for SACOSAN III and invites Community members' inputs that will be acknowledged while formalizing the final Declaration. Members are requested to cover the challenges of sanitation and mechanisms/commitments to address them in their suggestions.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Ratnakar Gedam](#), Planning Commission, New Delhi ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#); [Response 3](#))
2. [K. J. Nath](#), Sulabh International Social Service Organization, New Delhi
3. [Yusuf Kabir](#), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kolkata
4. [Venkatesh Aralikatty](#), Development Action and Research Centre, Mahboobnagar

5. [Pramod Dabrase](#), WaterAid (UK), India Regional Office, Bhopal
6. [Murli Sharma](#), International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad
7. [Rajesh K. Sood](#), National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai
8. Uday Bhawalkar, Bhawalkar Vermitech Private Limited, Pune ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
9. [Suvojit Chattopadhyay](#), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, United Kingdom
10. [Abhishek Mendiratta](#), Consultant, New Delhi
11. [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun
12. Rajesh Shah, Blue Planet Run/Peer Water Exchange, Bangalore ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
13. [M. Jahangir](#), FAN-SA Water Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan
14. [J. Geetha](#), Gramalaya, Tiruchirapalli
15. [Swati Sharma](#), Saviours, Meerut
16. [Kumar Rajnish](#), SulabhENVIS Centre, Sulabh International Institute of Health Hygiene (SIIHH), New Delhi
17. [Surendra Pandey](#), Consultant-Conservation of Forests and Advisor Forestry, Hyderabad
18. [Arunabha Majumder](#), All India Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, Kolkata*

* Offline Contribution

Further contributions are welcome!

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Summary of Responses

Declarations from high-level international events provide broad direction for future planning and activities, and are an indication of official commitment. Accordingly, the last two declarations for the South Asian Conferences on Sanitation (SACOSAN 1 and 2) have demonstrated that governments in the region are committed politically and economically to improving the sanitation condition of their populations. Responding to the query seeking inputs for SACOSAN 3 Declaration, members recommended it addresses sustainability issues, encourages local cost-effective technology and promotes community involvement in sanitation efforts.

Discussing **sustainability**, members urged the framers of the declaration to promote the use of innovative financing techniques, moving away from the current government-financed models used in South Asian countries. Another suggestion on ensuring adequate financial resources was to include a revolving fund for sanitation at the district level and make funds available through loans to women's self-help groups. Similar models exist in all South Asian countries and the declaration can promote them. This would shift ownership of sanitation initiatives from government to communities and improve hygiene behaviour.

One of the lacunae in most South Asian sanitation programmes is the low usage of toilets. Quoting a [study](#), members noted that even if 100% of the households have toilets, usage often remains low. Thus, they recommended the declaration a call for radical measures to ensure toilet utilization, rather than only advising the construction of toilets.

Moreover, since most sanitation programmes focus on toilet coverage, they often give inadequate attention to the quality of structures. The declaration, therefore, needs to emphasise sustainable sanitation, since toilets without proper superstructures or of inferior quality are not used. The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in [Uttarakhand](#), for example, has achieved notable success by supporting the construction of quality toilets at the community and household levels. In [Orissa](#), an NGO introduced quality toilets for the rural poor with piped water and promoted the concept that sanitation is not 'total' unless each family in a community is covered.

Sanitation initiatives need to **use of affordable, appropriate technology** to process human waste to reduce the impact on water resources. For example, the Sulabh Sauchalayas, use a low-cost sanitation model based on appropriate technology with community involvement and do not rely on government support. Sulabh developed a system that is simple enough for communities to maintain independently, which proved the key to its success. A similar system is the pour flush toilets in [Maharashtra](#) that use water purified using 'biosanitiser'. Similarly, appropriate technical solution solutions must find place in the declaration.

Looking at how NGOs working on sanitation have promoted sustainability and hygiene through **people-led approaches**, they have successfully reduced their dependence on government funds for constructing toilets, maintenance and public education by involving microfinance institutions and other community-based organizations. For example, in parts of [Tamil Nadu](#) an NGO has set up committees called Women's Action for Village Empowerment (WAVE) and Associations for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (AWASH) to promote sanitation and hygiene.

In addition, since most South Asian governments have a variety of welfare schemes for people living below the poverty line (BPL), the declaration should clearly state the official willingness to integrate sanitation, health and hygiene into existing government welfare schemes. The Indira Awas Yojana is one such scheme in India, where families living below the poverty line receive Rs 35,000 in the plains and Rs 38,500 in hilly or difficult areas to build a house. However, this is usually insufficient to build a toilet and these schemes do not end up promoting sanitation. The beneficiary families cannot afford a toilet even with the subsidy provided under TSC. However, some state governments have their own supplementary programmes, under which families get additional funds like the Kamaraj Housing Scheme in [Pondicherry](#).

SACOSAN 3 needs to emphasise **behaviour change through hygiene education** in schools, villages and slums to ensure regular use of toilets and the adoption of hygienic practices by both in-school and out-of-school children, and their families. For example, the [Nai Disha](#) programme trains people who formerly worked as manual scavengers in new vocational skills. It is critical the declaration reiterates that sanitation is a human right and that good sanitation, a matter of human dignity.

Overall, the proposed declaration needs to include quality, behaviour change, appropriate and affordable sanitation models, adequate financing, community-led approaches and need for integration with government schemes. It also needs to reflect the ground realities of the on-going sanitation programmes in South Asia by referring to measurable goals to help track the region's progress towards the MDGs and provide signposts for future SACOSANs. South Asia needs to work hard to achieve total sanitation coverage by 2025.

Comparative Experiences

Orissa

Gram Vikas Approach to Sanitation Promotes Community Level Participation (from [Suvojit Chattopadhyay](#), *Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK*)

The NGO Gram Vikas is working to provide quality toilets to the rural poor. They use a model built on the principle that sanitation is not 'total' unless every family is a part of the programme. Each family contributes labour and construction material towards the construction costs for building a toilet. By contributing, families are eligible for assistance for purchasing the other necessary inputs. Using this model, they have introduced a sanitation drive and quality toilets for the poor. [Read more](#)

Tamil Nadu

Community-Managed Toilet Systems by Gramalaya, Tiruchirapalli District (from [J. Geetha](#), *Gramalaya, Tiruchirapalli*)

Gramalaya has successfully implemented sanitation projects using the convergence approach. It promoted community-managed toilet systems in 117 slums across the district and women self-help groups have been maintaining them under a "pay and use system." Now, 168 slums have been declared open defecation-free, with support from the City Corporation and the NGO WaterAid. [Read more](#)

Uttarakhand

Total Sanitation Campaign Increasing Number of Household and School Toilets (from [Neelima Garg](#), *Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun*)

The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is being implemented in all the 13 districts in the state, by using a sector wide approach to facilitate the health and sanitation campaign. The Uttarakhand Jal Nigam, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan and the Swajal Project Management Unit have been assigned the duty of district-level implementation. As of 31 May 2008, under TSC 2,40,445 individual household latrines and 1,195 school latrines have been constructed. [Read more](#)

Pondicherry

Pondicherry Perunthalaivar Kamaraj Centenary Housing Scheme for Homeless Poor Fails to Substantially Improve Sanitation (from [Ratnakar Gedam](#), *Planning Commission, New Delhi*, [response 2](#))

Pondicherry has introduced the Kamraj Housing Scheme, a complementary scheme to Indira Aawas Yojana. It provides funds to BPL families to construct a new house if the family meets certain criteria. However, beneficiary families generally do not have adequate land to construct a proper living room, kitchen, and a bathroom with a toilet and a drainage system. As a result, the benefits under the scheme in terms of improved sanitation have not been achieved. [Read more](#)

Maharashtra

Biosanitizer Reduces Water Demand in Toilets, Pune (from [Uday Bhawalkar](#), *Bhawalkar Vermitech Private Limited, Pune*, [response 2](#))

Bhawalkar Vermitech Private Limited has designed and operated a total 'recycle water-flush toilet,' which can be used in public toilet facilities. This system has been operating for 7 years. The toilets only require 1 litre of water for personal cleaning. Flush-water generated from the thick sewage is used for flushing. Using this technology, a public toilet has been set up by the Green Cross Society, at the municipal sewage pumping station at Versova (Mumbai), which is used by 100 visitors per day. [Read more](#)

All India

TARU Survey Recommends Building Toilets on High Ground (from [Yusuf Kabir](#), *UNICEF, Kolkata*)

In 2008, TARU surveyed the status of sanitation in India. The study revealed that out of the 162 Nirmal Gram Puraskar-awarded (NGP) villages it studied, only 6 maintained their "open defecation-free status". The study reported that maintaining "open defecation-free" status during and after floods in rural areas is

a big challenge. Based on these findings, the study recommended the construction of toilets on high embankments or highlands. [Read more](#)

From [Kumar Rajnish](#), SulabhENVIS Centre S.I.I.H.H, New Delhi

Nai Disha Initiative Provides Scavengers New Employment Opportunities

Nai Disha was conceived by Sulabh International to break the chain of social injustice and inequality by training manual scavengers in various entrepreneurial activities. Under this scheme individuals have started their own businesses, such as beauty parlours, noodle and papad making shops, and dress designing stores. The UN invited 36 Nai Disha trainees to New York city for a special programme to showcase their newly acquired skills, talent and confidence. [Read more](#)

Sulabh International Builds Toilets for Individual Homes and Communities

In an attempt to provide better sanitation services across India, Sulabh started development of new and sustainable sanitation methods, their implementation and training in the fields of sanitation; biogas from human waste, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, environment, etc. Using these methods, it has built 1.2 million Sulabh Shauchalayas. These are now used by 6 million people, and another 10 million people use the NGO's 7,500 public toilets daily. [Read more](#)

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

Optimizing Health Benefits from Investments in CWSS Programme and Ensuring Sustainability by Integrating Hygiene Behaviour Issues in the Same (from [K. J. Nath](#), Sulabh International, New Delhi)

Paper; by K. J. Nath; Sulabh International Social Service Organization; New Delhi

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20100802.doc> (Doc, Size: 275 KB)

Discusses the health benefits of sanitation and hygiene, and the need for a change in attitude and health education in order to take the sanitation drive forward

From Uday Bhawalkar, Bhawalkar Ecological Research Institute (BERI), Pune

Another View of Water, Sanitation and Health ([response 1](#))

Paper; by Uday Bhawalkar; Bhawalkar Ecological Research Institute (BERI), Pune

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20100803.doc> (Doc, Size: 150 KB)

Explains why the chemical approach to sanitation is showing severe limitations, and often leads to odour, pathogens and pests, and that there is a need to change the approach

Odourless Self-flushing Public Toilet for Slum Sanitation ([response 2](#))

Article; by Vag Shantharam Shenai and R. Jitendra Toravi; Bhawalkar Ecological Research Institute ; Pune

Available at http://www.wastetohealth.com/odorless_public_toilet.html

Discusses odourless self-flushing public toilets constructed using the principles of biosanitizers by the Bhawalkar Ecological Research Institute

Ecorestoration of Ponds, Lakes and Rivers using Biosanitizer Technology ([response 2](#))

Paper; by Uday Bhawalkar and Sarita Bhawalkar; Bhawalkar Ecological Research Institute; Pune; 2008

Available at <http://www.wastetohealth.com/ecorestoration.html>

Discusses how biosanitizers are used for water purification to treat saline and brackish water from wells, borewells, lakes, rivers, etc

From [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

Designing Water Supply and Sanitation Projects to Meet Demand: The Engineer's Role

Report; Water Engineering Development Centre and UK Department for International Development; 2001
Available at <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/waterandsanitation/resources/pdf-files/DemandResponsiveApproach.pdf> (PDF, Size: 284 KB)

Investigates strategies to fulfill the demand for sanitation based on a review of literature and field studies in South Africa, Tanzania, Nepal and India

Manual on the Right to Water and Sanitation

Book; Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions; 2008

Available at <http://www.cohre.org/manualrtws>

Designed to assist policy makers and practitioners in implementing the human rights perspective to water and sanitation

Health, Dignity and Development: Meeting Global Water and Sanitation Goals

Document; Earthscan; 2005

Available at <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/WaterComplete-lowres.pdf> (PDF Size: 1.7 MB)

Outlines the steps necessary to expand the supply of water and sanitation coverage in order to achieve the MDGs

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, New Delhi (from [Yusuf Kabir](#), UNICEF, Kolkata)

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi 110011; <http://jnnurm.nic.in/>

Focuses on bringing efficiency to urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms – including sanitation, community participation, and accountability of ULBs/parastatal agencies.

TARU, New Delhi (from [K. J. Nath](#), Sulabh International Social Service Organization, New Delhi)

A 1/276, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029; info@taru.org; <http://www.taru.org> (site under construction 5/11/08)

Has done extensive research on sanitation in India, which has contributed significantly towards the transformation of policy and practice in the country

Gram Vikas, Orissa (from [Suvojit Chattopadhyay](#), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK)

Mohuda Village, Berhampur 760002, Ganjam, Orissa; Tel: 91-680-2261866, 2261869; Fax: 91-680-2261862; info@gramvikas.org; gramvikas@gmail.com; <http://www.gramvikas.org/enable.php>

Works to bring about sustainable improvements in the quality of life for the poor, and has worked extensively to provide quality toilets to the rural poor in Orissa

From [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun

Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun

A108 MDDA Dalanwala, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Implements water and sanitation programmes in the state and facilitates with panchayats under TSC where water supply programmes are being implemented

Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam, Dehradun

Maharani Bagh, G. M. S. Road, Dehradun 248006, Uttarakhand; Tel: 91-135-2763508; Fax: 91-135-2763507; info@uttarakhandjalvidyut.com; <http://www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com/>

Manages hydro-power generators at existing power stations, and develops and promotes new hydro-electric projects in Uttarakhand, and facilitates TSC in the state

Swajal Project Management Unit, Uttarakhand

pmu_uttaranchal@rediffmail.com; <http://gov.ua.nic.in/swajal/index.htm>

Delivers sustainable health and hygiene benefits to the rural population, through improvements in water supply and environmental sanitation services

Gramalaya, Tamil Nadu (from [J. Geetha](#))

12, 4th Cross, Thillainagar West, Tiruchirappalli 620018, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-9443161263; Fax: 91-431-4021563; gramalaya@airtelbroadband.in; <http://gramalaya.org/contactus.html>

Implements sanitation projects and promotes community-managed toilet systems in the slums of Tiruchirappalli

From Ratnakar Gedam, Planning Commission, New Delhi ([response 2](#))

Sarva Shikha Abhiyan, New Delhi

Department of School Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001; Tel: 91-11-23074113; webmaster.edu@nic.in; <http://ssa.nic.in/>

Seeks to extend and strengthen education infrastructure through the provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water facilities, etc

National Rural Health Mission, New Delhi

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, 401 & 404 A Wing, Nirman Bhawan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi 110011; Tel: 91-11-23061647; health@hub.nic.in; <http://mohfw.nic.in/>

Employs a synergistic approach linking health to determinants of good health - nutrition, sanitation, hygiene and safe drinking water

Pondicherry Perunthalaivar Kamaraj Centenary Housing Scheme for the Houseless Poor, Pondicherry

Town and Country Planning Department, Government of Pondicherry; Tel: 91-412-333399; cm@pon.nic.in; <http://tcpd.puducherry.gov.in/home.htm>

Administers the Kamaraj Centenary Housing Scheme for the homeless poor, including the provision for construction of toilets

Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, New Delhi (from [Swati Sharma](#), Saviours, Meerut)

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, 401 & 404 A Wing, Nirman Bhawan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi 110011; Tel: 91-11-23063175; Fax: 91-11-23063175; dircbhi@nic.in; <http://www.cbhidghs.nic.in/>

Provides information on the National Health Profile of India covering various demography, health care, morbidity and mortality indicators, sanitation coverage across India

From [Kumar Rajnish](#), SulabhENVIS Centre S.I.I.H.H, New Delhi

Sulabh International Social Service Organization, New Delhi

Sulabh Gram, Mahavir Enclave Palam-Dabri Road, New Delhi-110045; Tel: 91-11-25031518; Fax: 91-11-25034014; sulabh1@nde.vsnl.net.in; <http://www.sulabhinternational.org>

Provides sanitation services across India, and has built 1.2 million Sulabh Sauchalayas (toilets), which are used by 6 million people

Nai Disha, New Delhi

Sulabh Gram, Mahavir Enclave Palam-Dabri Road, New Delhi 110045; Tel: 91-11-25031518; Fax: 91-11-25034014; sulabh1@nde.vsnl.net.in;

http://www.sulabhinternational.org/pages/training/nai_disha_training.php

Vocational training centre, which has employed scavengers who previously worked on cleaning unhygienic toilets in various entrepreneurial activities

Recommended Upcoming Events

Third South Asian Conference on Sanitation, New Delhi, 16-21 November 2008 (from [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate)

Sponsored by Department of Drinking Water Supply, New Delhi; Information available at <http://ddws.nic.in/infosacosan/home.aspx>; Tel: 91-11-24361043; Fax: 91-11-24364113

Conference themes are sanitation and sustainability; institutions and partnerships for sanitation; sanitation and development; sanitation beyond toilets and; media advocacy

Responses in Full

[Ratnakar Gedam](#), Planning Commission, New Delhi (response 1)

About five-six years ago, when EU, OECD, the USA, etc. started taking interest in India as a fast growing economy, I had opportunity to participate in high-level delegations (headed by the Prime Minister, President, heads of state, etc.). I quoted the fact that over 90 per cent (80 per cent of those living in rural areas and 35% of people living in slums) defecate in the open because they have no access to toilets.

The first task before all educated people of advanced nations working in international organizations is to teach both decision-makers and people how to plan for closed toilets. I was advocating for finding ways and means but also national level strategies and allocation of funds in budgets. I spoke with several senior leaders, teachers, professors and people from NGOs. The achievements under the Total Sanitation Campaign are not in keeping with the expenditure.

We have a mission to the moon; do we plan to send people to the moon for their toilet. As a Class 5 student, I remember a joke in my village where an unmannered Indian lives in an ugly village, and lacking toilet manners, goes to the moon for his toilet.

In short, toilet (public, community, or private) construction must be given first priority. Walking long distance for drinking water, education, etc., is not as humiliating or risky as defecating in the open or on railway tracks.

I have lot more to say but I hope message is clear for setting priority. About framing law, I can write if asked to do so.

[K. J. Nath](#), Sulabh International Social Service Organization, New Delhi

I am attaching two files with my comments on the proposed Declaration for SACOSAN III. You can read suggestions on the Declaration at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20100801.doc> and an article on "Optimizing Health Benefits from Investments in CWSS Programme and ensuring sustainability by Integrating Hygiene Behaviour Issues in the same" at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20100802.doc>.

[Yusuf Kabir](#), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kolkata

The following suggested priorities can be in the declaration:

Sanitation and sustainability:

- Sustainability of NGP villages is a big challenge. A TARU survey in 2008 reveals that out of 162 studied NGP villages in India, only 6 NGPs are maintaining the open defecation-free status
- Maintaining open defecation-free status during and after floods is a big challenge. Stress should be on construction of toilets on high embankments or highlands
- More stress on use of toilets rather installation of toilets
- End-use monitoring

Sanitation and development

- Special message on International Year of Sanitation 2008 highlighting the socio-economic benefits towards use of toilet supported by evidence-based research. Stress should be given to initiate cross country studies to understand the socio-economic benefits of using toilets like health, retention and enrolment of girl child, etc.

Sanitation beyond toilets

- Ensuring safe disposal of solid and liquid waste
- Promoting hand-washing at critical times
- Water safety plans at household level (Collection, storage and handling of drinking water at household level)

Institutions and Partnership for Sanitation

- The Indian government has included 100 per cent urban sanitation as a goal in its 11th Five-Year Plan. Its ultimate aim is for people in urban areas to have access to safe sanitation facilities by 2012. The rural sanitation programme also aiming for total sanitation by 2012. Therefore, there should be some kind of convergence between schemes like JNNURM and TSC. Sanitation should not be viewed only as a rural problem as over 30 million urban households in India (35 per cent of the total) currently have inadequate access to sanitation facilities and more than 37 per cent of human excreta is not disposed off safely
- More stress on International Learning Exchange between SACOSAN countries and knowledge management and highlighting best practices and innovations.

Venkatesh Aralikatty, Development Action and Research Centre, Mahboobnagar

Two issues that need attention in the Declaration are:

- Railways shall urgently develop mechanisms for safe disposal of human excreta in the trains.
- All Government offices (central and state) shall have well managed toilet facilities (urinals and toilets) for their employees and visitors. Budgets and programs should reflect this commitment.

Pramod Dabrase, WaterAid (UK), India Regional Office, Bhopal

Here are a few suggestions for the SACOSAN III declaration. These suggestions are drafted mainly to meet urban sanitation gaps:

1. Promote the Revolving Sanitation Fund Approach (Loans given to individual households from Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL) families for toilet construction, through a local institutional mechanism and revolved at an affordable monthly installment. The entire process is governed by local NGOs) for enhancing toilet coverage. This has proven to be a very effective approach in urban slums. Government of India (GoI) should promote this approach and allocate/reserve funds for promoting sanitation through this approach under the existing scheme(s).

2. Promote community managed toilets in low-income urban settlements (Community toilets managed by local community groups/committees led by women), with pay and use system. Such toilets should be promoted in urban slums, where construction of individual toilets is difficult or not possible. Support from Urban Local Bodies (ULB) in terms of water supply, electricity supply and land must be made mandatory.
 3. Introduce incentive scheme for achieving open defecation free slums at the slum/ward/city level.
 4. The GoI, in partnership with state governments and ULBs, should take up aggressive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign for effective hygiene education and sanitation promotion, in towns and cities. Engaging local NGO in IEC promotion would make it effective.
 5. Promote city level federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and slum level committees as a platform to interact; and regular engagements with the community members, consolidate, and promote micro finance institutions (MFIs). Involve MFIs and local NGOs in the management of Revolving Sanitation Fund.
 6. Build and encourage partnership among civil societies and ULBs to monitor and sustain the efforts – empower them to act as a regulatory authority to track and regulate the progress at the town/city level.
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Murli Sharma, International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad

The mission to moon is an area of research. Research and education takes only a small fraction of our total expenditure. Research and public development are two different things. We have not been able to develop a good work culture for public development work. We all are responsible for this.

About toilets, in our country Bindeshwar Pathak and his group have done exemplary work. Involve them. We only have to find solution to our problems- no one from outside. Moreover, yes, we have to work hard about whatever we do. Mr Pathak has a principle - do not accept government money. He says that is because work is not accomplished by government money. It only completes a formality. While high-level delegations play a role as mentioned by Ratnakar Gedam, they achieve little on the ground.

The issues raised by Mr. Gedam make us all feel sorry. If we are honest in approach, this can be done. If we can send a mission to moon, we can as well build toilets.

Indira Gandhi was always right saying that public toilets made by taxpayer's money are seldom maintained properly. Who is then responsible? Tax payers? No! Or Members of the Planning Commission? No. Or it is just that beneficiaries are not bothered? Yes, this is what is happening.

Mr. Gedam, we believe the Planning Commission has a major role to play in keeping up the pressure until the work is done. I hope you can help us with this objective.

Construction of toilets cannot be "the first" national priority but "one of the several priority areas".

Rajesh K. Sood, National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai

A suggestion from my end – We call upon governments to create an enabling environment for rights-based approaches for sanitation including, provision of sustainable water connection and storage tanks in

schools for handwashing; banning polythene, provision of toilets for males and females to encourage toilet use; using eco-friendly technology; segregation of waste in schools and proper local eco-friendly disposal, and recycling of waste kitchen water in schools for gardening and beautification of schools.

A health promotion framework for schools can lead the sanitation movement with self-monitoring tools to be put in place to track progress.

Uday Bhawalkar, Bhawalkar Vermitech Private Limited, Pune (*response 1*)

We should change the paradigm of sanitation, from chemical to ecological.

The following write-up may explain why the chemical approach is showing severe limitations and there is a need to change the approach. You can download the document at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20100803.doc>.

Suvojit Chattopadhyay, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, United Kingdom

Putting up the TARU study should be a timely reminder to all those in this sector. It is not just enough to put up toilets and move on. It is clear by now that sanitation without intensive hygiene education will never work and that only hygiene education will not do either.

It is of paramount importance that sanitation programmes across the country recognise the need to create private assets with a strong sense of community ownership. This will not happen if –

1. They get it free or without any considerable effort; and
2. If the quality of the structure is so bad that it becomes un-usable in a matter of days

In this setting, the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) should move away from its minimalistic attitude. It should look ahead to a model where toilets constructed are of good quality, are easy to clean (and provide water in the toilet wherever possible) and where people invest time, effort and resources in constructing a toilet block while also imbibing valuable hygiene lessons. There are models available in India for reference.

Gram Vikas is an NGO based in Orissa, which has been pioneering the cause of good quality toilets (with piped water supply and an attached bathing room) for the rural poor, all of the same standard, no matter how poor the family is. This model is built on, among others, the principle that sanitation is not 'total' unless each and every family is a part of the programme; people will contribute in the form of labour and locally available construction material towards the costs of constructing the physical infrastructure and will be eligible for assistance to source those inputs that have to be sourced from outside.

Gram Vikas also puts mechanisms into place to ensure that all maintenance work is paid for by the community themselves and most importantly, that the sanitation coverage expands automatically to cover any new family in the locality. The local leadership structures are strengthened and sensitised so that self-governing norms are evolved, ensuring that deviant behaviour is dealt with immediately.

Sanitation is a great boon for all, particularly for women. However, a shabby toilet (often without a pucca wall or roof) is often worse than none at all. How long will we keep perpetrating our follies on people?

Abhishek Mendiratta, Consultant, New Delhi

The United Nations, during the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, developed a series of Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) aiming to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development. The specific target set for the provision of water supply and sanitation services is to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2015.

The following issues that need attention in the Declaration are:

1. Deterioration of training quality due to fast scaling-up, spread and growing demand for training has already started in some places. Government and international funding agencies have been engaging training agencies from the open market through open tender and selection. Some of these agencies have conducted a large number of trainings. These have been hands-on, involving the triggering of CLTS in communities, but have been followed by large gaps between the number of triggers and number of communities becoming ODF. This ratio, and other indicators of progress towards ODF status, should be closely monitored. Where these are disappointing, it may reflect poor quality of training.
2. The concept of sustainability is more of a journey rather than a stage to reach. Nevertheless, it is crucial, that sanitation systems are evaluated carefully with regard to all dimensions of sustainability. Since there is no one-for-all sanitation solutions, which fulfill the sustainability criteria under different circumstances to the same extent, this system evaluation will depend on the local framework and has to take into consideration existing environmental, technical, socio-cultural and economic conditions.
3. Human dignity, quality of life and environmental security at household levels should be at the centre of any sanitation approach.
4. In line with good governance principles, decision-making should involve participation of all stakeholders, especially the consumers and providers of services.
5. Waste should be considered as a resource, and its management should be holistic and form a part of integrated water resources, nutrient flow and waste management processes.
6. The domain in which environmental sanitation problems are resolved should be kept to the minimum practicable size (household, community, town, district, catchment and city).
7. The implications of these shifts may be significant for institutions wishing to adopt or scale up CLTS. It implies changes in institutional and personal mindsets and behaviours which tend to be philanthropic (i.e. to subsidise), professional (i.e. to promote high standards), and bureaucratic (i.e. to spend big budgets). CLTS, on the other hand, is founded on the principle of no hardware subsidy, often with facilitation by local 'non-expert' community members, supported by low-cost training, none of which require much budget.

It aims to be a truly community-led process and scaling up also needs to be driven at the community level (and not driven by the need to disburse funds). International agencies, including NGOs, have a role to play in promoting the spread of such locally-empowering initiatives. Government and national NGOs have roles in assuring favourable conditions and supporting the lateral spread.

Neelima Garg, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun

I would like to draw your attention to the Uttarakhand scenario with regard to the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). The Total Sanitation Campaign is being implemented in all the 13 districts of Uttarakhand.

The State Government is following a Sector Wide Approach in the implementation of water and sanitation programmes. In view of this, all the three sectoral institutions namely, Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan and the Swajal Project Management Unit have been assigned with the duty of

district-level implementation of the TSC. The Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam and Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan will take up the responsibility of facilitation of works under TSC in all Gram Panchayats where water supply schemes will be constructed by them under the Sector Programme.

Under the Total Sanitation Campaign, 240,445 individual household latrines and 1,195 school latrines have been constructed up to 31st May 2008 in the state.

[Rajesh Shah](#), Blue Planet Run/Peer Water Exchange, Bangalore (*response 1*)

Maybe this is historically out of the context of a declaration, but is it not time that some concrete milestones towards goals are included? Shouldn't 'High-powered' also mean the power to act, to set a visible goal?

The declarations include statements like '... million reportedly die each year ...' so why not set a goal to halve it?

It would be good to share what 'According high priority to sanitation' and 'Striving tirelessly to increase the priority.' translated to.

The comments of [Mr. Yusuf Kabir](#) regarding TARU's study and emphasis on use can be translated into goals and actions. [Mr. Venkatesh Aralikatty](#)'s request for railways and government offices are certainly clearly identifiable and achievable. [Mr. Pramod Dabrase's](#) suggestion to promote a Revolving Sanitation fund can be quantified by an amount or a range and a date range too.

It would be great to see some progress towards the goals and achievements of milestones. Having some accountability by measuring actions towards the goals is a source of credibility. And the creation of capability and capacity.

If there had been some actionable goals in the first declaration (2003), that resulted in activities in 2004, today we could have results of activities, 3-4 years past completion. We would be able to verify sustainability or learn about how to integrate sustainability into work. It might also generate lessons about how the players in the sector work with each other and funding and balance the goal with their own ambitions.

It is important that all activity is reported, and if not reported, then that is noted. Failures are certainly acceptable if they come with lessons.

[M. Jahangir](#), FAN-SA Water Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan

It is suggested that we revisit our emphasis on the development of open defecation free (ODF) areas. I think we should find alternatives to ODF, when we do not go outside to defecate and what happens to the faeces we produce.

1. It stays in the home for 12-24 hours in case of dry latrines cleaned by manual scavengers
2. It is flushed out with a little water, that leads to a drain in the street
3. It is conveyed to a flush pipe line in the street, that leads to a pond just outside the settlement
4. It is mixed with fresh water in a canal or river

5. It is used as irrigation water for vegetable farms just outside the city providing fresh farm produce to citizens, which if not used carefully, can cause diseases

In most South Asian countries, only small portion of domestic waste water/industrial wastewater is treated prior to disposal, and hence there is inadequate safe disposal of human waste. This is because the imported technologies for treatment are designed for stringent effluent standards, and increases the cost of technology and hardware.

I suggest the proposed declaration includes South Asia's needs for local viable technologies to treat water, domestic and industrial waste. To do this efficiently we need to have support of a strong research team from a centre of excellence in water technologies. These scientists and engineers will provide an indigenous choice of treatment technologies, training staff, designing plants, supervising construction and starting operations.

I hope you have enough time to give this thought a thorough consideration.

J. Geetha, Gramalaya, Tiruchirapalli

I agree with [Promod's](#) suggestions. Gramalaya is one of the partner organizations of WaterAid and has successfully implemented sanitation projects using the convergence approach in the Tiruchirapalli District of Tamil Nadu.

1. Gramalaya promoted community-managed toilet systems in 117 slums of Tiruchirapalli District and women self-help groups have been maintaining them under the pay and use system. As many as 168 slums have been announced as ODF slums in the District with the support of the City Corporation and WaterAid.
2. We arranged revolving loan fund for 490 beneficiaries in urban slums and 1,468 beneficiaries in rural villages for toilet construction and household water connection with the support of WaterPartners International.
3. Guardian MFI disbursed loan to 2,538 beneficiaries for individual toilet construction, household water connections and UGD connection in Trichy, and people have been repaying promptly.
4. Gramalaya also organized a toilet campaign and hand-washing campaign with the involvement of 30,000 schoolchildren, 1,800 women self-help groups in collaboration with TSC. So far 56 rural panchayats have been announced as ODF panchayats and one whole block (Thatheingarpet block) has been declared as an ODF block in Trichy using the CLTS approach.
5. Women's Action for Village Empowerment (WAVE) has been formed in the Trichy City Corporation, which is working for community toilet maintenance, monitoring the ODF status, contacting the corporation officials regularly and solve problems, reporting about income and expenditure of the toilets to the Corporation, etc.
6. Gramalaya has formed Association for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (AWASH) committees in rural and urban areas for sustainability. These have a mixed group of members in the particular area. These AWASH committees are working for village/slum sanitation issues and supporting PRIs and Municipality.

The above activities have been implemented successfully in the Trichy District and we suggested anyone can use the above strategies for promoting ODF villages.

Ratnakar Gedam, Planning Commission, New Delhi (*response 2*)

I feel the SACOSAN declaration should consider the following to improve the quality of life, as envisaged under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). It should incorporate Sanitation as a fundamental right, and Sanitation for All by 2025.

Without monetary assistance, the rural sanitation campaign cannot function, and attempts to ensure the money reaches the hands of targeted poor beneficiaries is necessary to eliminate corruption in the government. The result is money provided for the scheme is spent without serving the purpose or only partly meeting the purpose for which scheme was planned and executed. This is true for the Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY) where money given to construct a house for below poverty line (BPL) families is so inadequate that sometimes walls are erected but the roof is missing. Obviously, these funds do not cover the cost of a toilet, so such half or partially constructed houses lack sanitation though they are intended to promote sanitation.

However, Pondicherry has introduced a complementary scheme to IAY under the name of the Kamraj Housing Scheme and it provides more funds for BPL families to construct the new house if a family meets specified criteria. But what happens is either the beneficiary family does not have adequate land to construct a living room, kitchen, bathroom and toilet as well as a drainage system. These constraints also restrict / partially fulfill the benefits envisaged under the scheme after spending funds.

Community toilets gets choked as anti-social people to spoil them either by putting liquor bottles, half-consumed biddis, cigarettes, gutka packets, etc. Indeed social awareness and educating people through sanitation campaign is needed and unless people think of sanitation for themselves, their families, neighbours and the whole villages, efforts will be only partially successful. This should be incorporated into the declaration.

If the importance of money and its effectiveness, efficiency, economy (3E or Value for Money) is realized at the grassroots level through Panchayat Raj institutions by local elected representatives, the whole sanitation drive will be but a partial success.

What is then best solution? Rural Development theories, textbook solutions and practices being used today are outdated and have no practical relevance. The declaration should suggest radical solutions. The best solution is to have three installations in each village under the control of village Panchayats but managed by qualified local ITI-trained people. First, water treatment plants with overhead storage for drinking water and piped water supply in contrast to hand pumps / bore or wells. Second, sewage treatment plants. Third, adequate community based toilets to cater to all those who have no toilets of their own. All the waste (collection and processing of animal dung for generating bio-gas separately) must be processed into biogas in the village in a self sustaining manner.

There should be a radical approach to rural development, reflected in the declaration, by reconstruction of the whole village along modern lines at the cost of the government to provide amenities like electricity, water, toilets, kitchen, piped gas, using the vacant land. The entire population of say 1500 families could be accommodated in multi-storeyed apartments. Such an effort would increase the efficacy of government schemes such as supplementary nutrition, mid-day meals, anganwadis, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Rural Health Mission.

People will be happy to donate their lands occupied by huts if the benefits are told to them. Even assuming there are over 80 lakh of villages and entire cost is borne by tax payers it would be still cheaper if one calculates the benefits. Because the cumulative cost of all annual schemes, five year plans, etc., would be several times higher than such a onetime massive investment in reconstruction of whole villages.

A rural development cess or tax of say 4% on income tax, 8% on corporate tax and exports/imports would generate enough money to reconstruct villages in batches and within say 15 years India as whole

would have a different scenario. This will also lead to industrial growth in villages which eventually arrest migration from rural to urban and migration of young people from one state (like UP, Bihar, Orissa, etc.) to another (like Maharashtra, Delhi, etc.). India's GDP growth can exceed 12% per annum and the per capita income of the rural population can double every 5 years, which will eventually make nation prosperous.

Swati Sharma, Saviours, Meerut

The declaration should focus on children, who should be placed first in the debate on improving hygiene standards in South Asia. Since the first SACOSAN in 2003, around 100 million additional people now have toilets. We also know that more girls will go to schools that provide separate and private facilities. Rapid urbanization means that the number of people in cities without adequate toilets has increased from 134 million in 1990 to 153 million in 2004, yet the urban sanitation coverage is still double that of rural areas.

Sanitation coverage in urban areas is 83 per cent. Five of the 10 top killer diseases of children aged 1-5 are mainly caused by poor sanitation, inadequate water supply and poor personal hygiene. Poor sanitation and related disease burden result in an annual loss of 180 million man-days and Economic loss of Rs. 12,000 million (Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 1998-99). Sanitation promotion and waste management can generate revenue and employment opportunities for millions particularly in toilet construction, waste recycling, vermin-composting. The declaration should incorporate these elements.

The ratio of girls/boys in school is 81% girls and 85 per cent boys. The female and male school completion rates are just 34 per cent for girls and 49 per cent for boys (NFHS-III, 2005-06). The declaration should emphasise that proper sanitation facilities in the schools help in improving girls' enrolment.

Ratnakar Gedam, Planning Commission, New Delhi (response 3)

India lives in her villages and has the largest population of poor people, hungry mouths, and starvation deaths. What I meant in my earlier post was it has become fashionable in India to compare its progress with that of the US and EU. In several official documents India is being projected as an economic, military and scientific superpower that will overtake the US or EU. This overlooks the facts that India ranks low in terms of per capita GDP, Human Development Index, doing business index, quality of life index, etc., some of the issues that the SACOSAN declaration should address.

In doing so they forget that USA, UK, France and Germany do not have 70% of their population living in rural areas. Also advanced countries have eradicated various divides - rural-urban, literacy, digital etc. Therefore, given the limitation of funds and revenue generation capacity of the country, the tax payers' money spent on space science is at the cost of sanitation and food for millions of people.

Moreover, we are repeating what has been scientifically proved and demonstrated by US in the 1940s (atom bomb) and in the 1960s and 1970s (moon landings and space programme). The idea is to prioritize national issues and not criticize the moon expedition. In other words, basic needs, sanitation, hygiene and integration would impact the welfare of the largest number of the population. The declaration should stress on improving the access to basic needs for the welfare of the largest number of people.

Also, would Neelima please inform me about the cost per individual toilets, and the cost of toilets in higher secondary schools, what is the source of water supply and the coverage by TSC.

Kumar Rajnish, SulabhENVIS Centre, Sulabh International Institute of Health Hygiene (SIIHH), New Delhi

To accelerate sanitation and hygiene coverage, and enhance peoples' quality of life in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals. I am putting my views for the declaration as follows:

Egestion is one the processes essential for the sustenance of life but this important biological process is never contemplated upon. Excretion is either treated with ridicule or derision and consequently human waste has universally remained a loathsome subject. People often fail to notice that excretion is as important as eating. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why toilet has always remained the most neglected commodity of human civilization. People can live without food or water for several days but it is impossible to suppress the call of nature. One has to attend to it over everything else. Therefore, the toilet is the most important space in any house and we cannot imagine a life without it.

Between 1990 and 2006, the proportion of people without improved sanitation decreased by only 8%. Without an immediate acceleration in progress, the world will not achieve even half the MDG sanitation target by 2015. Based on current trends, the total population without improved sanitation in 2015 will have decreased only slightly since 1990, to 2.4 billion. At the current rate, the world will miss the MDG sanitation target by over 700 million people. To meet the target, at least 173 million people on average per year will need to begin using improved sanitation facilities. The declaration needs to incorporate these elements of the scale of the problem.

Toilets are not just a necessity but also a symbol of human dignity. The enclosed space of toilet provides privacy for one of the most primal body functions saving human beings from bestial act of open defecation. Therefore, having a toilet is a fundamental right of every human being. But rural and peri-urban India presents an entirely different picture. Every morning people set out towards the fields or the outskirts to relieve themselves.

Women bear the brunt of this utter lack of proper toilet facilities as they have to finish their routine before daylight. This is not only shameful but it also makes them vulnerable to sexual assault and molestation. Women, in the absence of toilet facilities at home are the worst sufferers, and the declaration must bring this out.

Compelled to withhold the call of nature from sunrise to sunset and subject to the likelihood of insecurity, indignity and lack of privacy, women have gained the most from provision of toilet facilities. The absence of toilets in schools keeps girl students from attending schools and increases the drop-out rate of girls. Many people in rural and urban areas are subject to this indignity because of the absence of toilet provisions.

Developing Technology for a Social Cause:

Traditionally no attention was paid to the occupational hazards of hygiene and health associated with manual scavenging. The system on one hand created large scale environmental pollution and added to the burden of infectious diseases and on the other hand created social discrimination and untouchability in society. Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, Founder, Sulabh Sanitation & Social Reform Movement, realized that no amount of advocacy and sensitization would change this unless it is backed by technology which ensures that no manual handling is required for human excreta disposal and open defecation as well as environmental pollution is totally eliminated.

Committed to eliminating the historical injustice against the scavengers, Dr. Pathak strove hard, experimented and researched and finally came up with a suitable technology to convert lakhs of bucket latrines into two-pit pour-flush toilets. These toilets developed by Sulabh International Social Service Organisation caught the imagination of the nation and as a result, Sulabh public and individual toilets came up all over India. It has been a long journey from a small town in Arah to 1,100 towns in 29 states

and 7 Union territories, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. It has crossed the frontiers into Afghanistan, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America.

1.2 million Sulabh Sauchalayas built in individual houses today are being used by 6 million people and more than 7,500 public toilets, by 10 million people daily. These public toilets have been built in small towns also where there are no facilities of toilets, bathrooms, urinals and drinking water. It has become a boon for the slum dwellers especially for the women. Sulabh is engaged in the development of new and sustainable technologies, their implementation, demonstration and dissemination of information, training and consultancy in the fields of sanitation, biogas from human waste, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, environment, pollution study, etc.

It has also been recognized by the international community as a global best practice which could be an instrument for achieving millennium development goals for providing sanitation and human excreta disposal facilities to more than 2 billion people all over the world who are presently having no access to safe and sanitary human excreta disposal facilities and based on years of research and study of the problem. I submit the declaration should have reference to this best practice.

Community Toilets as Public Health Centres:

Despite substantial improvements in water and sanitation coverage, both mortality and morbidity figures indicate a significant burden of communicable diseases derived from water, sanitation and other environment factors. We are promoting an innovative method to use the Sulabh toilet complexes as Public Health Centres.

The main focus is to develop an awareness and education centers for prevention of various diseases like STD & AIDS by exhibiting various publications and distributing free condoms. Our toilet complexes are now equipped with condom vending machines especially in urban areas. Besides, over 1,000 women volunteers have been trained in prevention of STD & AIDS in the urban slums of Delhi and NCR. These public toilets work as community development centres which provide services like health check-ups, CDMs, reading room, baby feeding rooms, STD Booths, etc.

Social Commitment towards Cleanliness:

Sulabh believes in philosophy of "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". Our focal area is not only restricted to construction of Individual and Public Toilets but we are always striving for the upkeep of clean and hygienic toilets. We provide 24*7 services to the people and community at large. The best example with us is the World's biggest Toilet Complex at Shirdi, Maharashtra equipped with 120 WCs, 108 bathing cubicles, 28 special toilets, six dressing rooms and 5,000 lockers and other facilities coupled with a biogas generation system.

The organization has collaborated with several governmental agencies, national & international development organizations and NGOs like UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, WSSCC, UNDP, UNHabitat, UNCHS, WSP, etc., to attain the goal of providing clean toilets to everyone. We have recently constructed five community toilet complexes at Kabul, Afghanistan, with the aid from Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. In that war-torn country, people do not have enough to eat and clean toilets are a luxury which ordinary people cannot afford, but these toilet complexes have solved problems of more than 5,000 people who daily use the facility.

NAI DISHA - New Beginnings to Lives Disgraced:

From past 38 years the organization has made efforts to liberate manual scavengers from sub-human work of carrying nightsoil. The noble idea of starting a vocational centre at Alwar is to take women scavengers out of their dirty occupation and bring them into the mainstream of society. That is how the vocational training centre was rightly named "Nai Disha".

Nai Disha was conceived with the sole objective of breaking this chain of social injustice and inequality by training liberated scavengers in various entrepreneurial activities. Under the leadership of Dr. Pathak, they have started their own businesses like beauty parlours, noodle and papad making, dress designing, etc. The UN invited 36 trainees of Nai Disha to New York for a special programme to showcase their skills, talent and confidence. Human dignity is an important and needs to find mention in the declaration.

Sanitation - A Top Priority:

Sulabh is a pioneer of low cost sanitation with more than 35 years' experience of working all over India and abroad. Its initiatives and approach to implementation of sanitation programme have been hailed as an outstanding innovation in combating the menace of environmental pollution by national and international organizations and people.

Impressed with the success of Sulabh programme, the UNDP in its Human Development Report 2003 has recommended that "the Sulabh latrine can promote environmental sanitation in most densely populated urban areas. But to do so, it must be adopted by international agencies as a model for widespread promotion in developing countries." Sulabh has been given Special Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Low cost sanitation is another aspect to be considered in the declaration.

Conclusion:

A joke has been around for many years. In the days when you couldn't count on a public toilet facility, an English woman was planning a trip to India. She registered to stay in a small guesthouse owned by the local schoolmaster. She was concerned about whether the guesthouse had a WC.

In England, a bathroom is commonly called a WC which stands for "Water Closet". She wrote to the schoolmaster inquiring of the facilities about the WC. The schoolmaster, not fluent in English asked the local priest if he knew the meaning of WC. Together they pondered possible meanings of the letters and concluded that the lady wanted to know if there was a "Wayside Chapel" near the house. A bathroom never entered their minds. So the schoolmaster wrote the following reply:

"Dear Madam,

I take great pleasure in informing you that the WC is located 9 miles from the house. It is located in the middle of a grove of pine trees, surrounded by lovely grounds. It is capable of holding 229 people and is open on Sundays and Thursdays. As there are many people expected in the summer months, I suggest you arrive early. There is, however, plenty of standing room. This is an unfortunate situation especially if you are in the habit of going regularly. It may be of some interest to you that my daughter was married in the WC, since she met her husband there.

It was a wonderful event. There were 10 people in every seat. It was wonderful to see the expressions on their faces. My wife, sadly, has been ill and unable to go recently. It has been almost a year since she went last, which pains her greatly. You will be pleased to know that many people bring their lunch and make a day of it.

Others prefer to wait till the last minute and arrive just in time! I would recommend that your ladyship plan to go on a Thursday, as there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are excellent and even the most delicate sounds can be heard everywhere. The newest addition is a bell, which rings every time a person enters. We are holding a bazaar to provide plush seats for all since many feel it is long needed. I look forward to escorting you there myself and seating you in a place where you can be seen by all.

With deepest regards,
The School Master"

The woman never visited India!!!

Let's hope that situation improves not only in India but the rest of the world and nobody is deprived of the basic facilities of toilet.

Rajesh Shah, Blue Planet Run/Peer Water Exchange, Bangalore (*response 2*)

During my visits to villages in different parts of the world where sanitary facilities have been provided (by my organization and others), it was interesting to visit families that received a latrine, when they also had animals (cows, pigs, dogs, etc). So while living in a HODF (Human Open Defecation Free) environment there was a fair bit of AOD (Animal Open Defecation) happening.

I looked for studies to show whether removing human waste was enough to prevent (reduce) diseases and protect water sources, etc. or whether we also needed to manage animal waste. Of course, it is obvious that animal waste cannot enter water bodies, but I was trying to understand how bad open animal excrement was with regard to disease burden. How much reduction in disease burden would occur due to managing human waste only?

Nature has good design principles to absorb human and animal wastes. We need to understand and work within these principles, in light of increased human population and footprint and privacy needs.

So to add to Mr. Jahangir's very good point, we need to also understand and see how our technical approaches impact use of resources (water, sewage, etc). Particularly if there is a failure of the system, then what are the incidents that can take place?

It is radical to think that in some cases open sanitation can be adapted (think of it as open ecosan) and combined with a smaller sanitation system in rural areas. For example, provide eco-san for women and let men use open sanitation facilities, but use sand to cover to prevent insect. We may find that a mixture of approaches will work well together, cost less in operation, have fewer points of failure, and are easily absorbed by villagers and their ecosystem.

Clearly, this would be hard to put in a declaration, but we should be open to it.

Surendra Pandey, Consultant-Conservator of Forests and Advisor Forestry, Hyderabad

These are good ideas needed for taking action. However, I am confused as to whether we will be in position to reach the villages where water itself is a problem, leave alone the disposal of human waste through WC, and whether it will be possible to improve dry toilets which Indian have been using since centuries. The declaration should point us in this direction and balance sanitation with water availability.

Uday Bhawalkar, Bhawalkar Vermitech Private Limited, Pune (*response 2*)

When we do not have enough water for drinking, can we afford to use water-wasting technology for sanitation? Municipal sewage is 99.9% water that is the solids content is just 0.1%. We use our precious drinking water just to flush away the excreta and urine, into rivers, lakes or into seas.

We have designed and operated a total recycle water-flush toilet that is suitable for public toilets. Please see the details at http://www.wastetohealth.com/odorless_public_toilet.html. This system has been operating for 7 years now.

People visit this toilet with only 1 liter of water for personal cleaning. Flush-water is generated from the thick sewage and is used for flushing. There is no odour or insects breeding in the treatment system because the Biosanitizer keeps on producing need-based oxygen for the sanitation.

Biosanitizers have also been used for water purification, to treat saline and brackish water from the wells, borewells and also from lakes, rivers, etc. Please visit <http://www.wastetohealth.com/ecorestoration.html> for more details.

The success has been achieved by harnessing the principles of ecology, which regard human waste as plant food. Sanitation problems arise only when we disregard these principles.

[Arunabha Majumder](#), All India Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, Kolkata*

Here are my comments on Sanitation and Sustainability-

Sanitation is sustainable when:

- It functions and all people are using it
- It is able to deliver appropriate level of benefits (convenience, reliability, health, quality of life, socio-economical benefit)
- In an equitable way (affordability, benefit to men, women, children/rich and poor)
- Over a prolonged period of time (structurally good and safe, develop use-habits, developing a sense that toilet is an essential house-component)
- Developing alternate delivery mechanism (RSM/ Production Centres, Involvement of PRI/NGOs)
- Involves community (PHAST, awareness and motivation, behaviour change, involvement of women)

Sanitation beyond toilet:

- To include all components of environmental sanitation
- Better management of organic and inorganic solid wastes (Segregation, recycling, composting, secured landfilling and land reclamation)
- Better liquid waste management (greywater recycling, use in kitchen-garden, soakage pits)
- Food sanitation/hygiene
- Vector control
- Personal hygiene and domestic cleanliness
- Use of smokeless ovens

Sanitation denotes a comprehensive concept; in fact, it is WAY OF LIFE, which is expressed in clean home, community, institution for better health and safe environment.

** Offline Contribution*

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Water Community in India at se-wes@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-watr] Query: Developing the SACOSAN III Declaration – Advice. Additional Reply."

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