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### **Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

## **International Year of Sanitation, 2008**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

Despite significant efforts by Governments, organizations and other stakeholders, progress has been somewhat slow and uneven towards reaching the Millennium Development Goal target of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation: 41 per cent of the global population — some 2.5 billion people — still lack access to basic sanitation facilities.

In its resolution 61/192, entitled “International Year of Sanitation, 2008”, the General Assembly encouraged all States, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to increase awareness of the importance of sanitation and to promote action at all levels. Not only did the Year provide an opportunity to put the issue of sanitation in the spotlight, it galvanized the efforts and thinking of the international community to work more effectively and coherently. Advocacy efforts during the Year attracted widespread interest and inspired wide-ranging actions and partnerships.

This momentum is expected to continue well beyond the Year with the key message that sanitation matters and is an important development issue. However, future efforts will need to approach the sanitation issue in a much broader context and encompass all its aspects, including provision of basic sanitation services, sewerage, and wastewater treatment and reuse.

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## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/192, entitled “International Year of Sanitation, 2008”, the General Assembly, expressing concern at the slow and insufficient progress in providing access to basic sanitation services, declared 2008 the International Year of Sanitation; called upon States, organizations at all levels and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to make voluntary contributions; encouraged all States, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of sanitation and to promote action at all levels; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to that request by the General Assembly and benefited in particular from the technical input and contributions provided by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

## II. Overview

3. According to the latest available data consolidated by the World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, only 62 per cent of the world’s population has access to improved sanitation, that is, sanitation facilities ensuring hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact. That translates into a staggering 2.5 billion people living in unacceptable conditions. Exposure to human excreta causes a myriad of health problems, the most common one being diarrhoea. The unavailability of a safe and clean place to defecate erodes human dignity and exposes women and girls to conditions that are both unsafe and humiliating. Access to improved sanitation is often cited as the most important development intervention in the history of developed countries, as sanitation coverage allowed for significant medical, social and economic advances.

4. The world is not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation, i.e. to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. In fact, based on current projections, the total population without improved sanitation in 2015 (2.4 billion) will only be slightly lower than in 1990. This means the target will have been missed for over 700 million people.

5. The importance of sanitation has been highlighted in several national and international conferences and meetings. In the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),<sup>1</sup> Governments agreed to set a target of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the population without basic sanitation. At its twelfth session, in 2004, the Commission on Sustainable Development reviewed the state of implementation of sanitation-related activities and concluded that, despite significant efforts by Governments,

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

organizations and other stakeholders, progress towards the target had been somewhat slow and uneven: 41 per cent of the global population still lacked access to basic sanitation facilities and sanitation remained an institutional orphan. The Commission accordingly emphasized the need to address a number of challenges and obstacles impeding greater progress. Following that review, the Commission agreed, at its thirteenth session, on a number of policy actions and measures to accelerate the implementation of sanitation-related activities.

### **III. International initiatives**

6. To coordinate activities during the Year, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat was designated as the lead institution, to work closely with the UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation coordinated by UNICEF, the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia.

7. On 7 May 2007, a coordination meeting was convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNICEF and the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation at United Nations Headquarters with the participation of stakeholders including organizations of the United Nations system, development banks, non-governmental organizations, Governments and civil society to develop a road map and objectives and to identify each group's role in responding to the global sanitation crisis. The agreed objectives were to raise awareness and expedite implementation of activities in the sanitation sector in order to reach the target set for 2015. This was operationalized in an action plan consisting of eight objectives for the Year. The action plan included activities in the areas of awareness-raising, preparation of new and updated publications, advocacy, monitoring, expedited implementation, capacity-building and cost evaluation. It also emphasized a multilevel and multi-stakeholder approach to finding sustainable and comprehensive solutions to sanitation problems.

8. On 21 November 2007, the official global launch of the Year — organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation — took place at United Nations Headquarters. At the launch, the logo was unveiled and a hand-washing ceremony was held.

9. The Year was the central focus of the UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation; and activities were supported by various donors, including the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. An advocacy and communication strategy was produced prior to the launch of the Year to guide support and coordinate communications activities and initiatives in both developed and developing countries. The strategy's key messages included: sanitation is vital for human health, sanitation contributes to dignity and social development, sanitation generates economic benefit, sanitation helps the environment and sanitation is achievable.

10. Awareness-raising campaigns and educational initiatives represent the majority of projects initiated and conducted during the Year. The Year's home page, hosted and administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, included several tools for advocacy, information on sanitation issues and news on ongoing and initiated projects. A "sanitation library" features articles, reports, CD-ROM and

other advocacy material. The home page constitutes an important focal point for sanitation activism and for organizations of the United Nations system active in this area.

11. The UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, developed information packages for politicians and the media and for general advocacy purposes. At the initiative of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), the information was made available in three languages; it included a booklet, fact sheets, a matrix, links to useful websites, talking points and posters, and was distributed worldwide by partner organizations. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and UNICEF produced a flagship publication, entitled “Tackling a global crisis”, to enhance understanding of the Year’s message and buy-in to the cause of improving sanitation globally. Over 20,000 copies have been printed and distributed. In addition, many copies were printed in advance of the official publication to meet demand at events held early in the Year. Preliminary feedback suggests that the publication was also downloaded from the Internet and reprinted for dissemination at global events.

12. In cooperation with the Year, the German Toilet Organization launched a worldwide awareness-raising and advocacy campaign on sanitation. With support from UN-Water, a travelling exhibition called “Sanitation is dignity” visited public venues around the globe. The exhibition consists of exhibition figures, information elements and a supporter point to break the “toilet taboo” and create a platform for open discussion on sanitation.

13. The UN-Water Task Force on Sanitation has prepared an online scrapbook to celebrate the achievements made during the Year. With its focus on country-level achievements in the sanitation sector, this resource will allow ongoing dialogue and continued action for improved sanitation. The virtual scrapbook, which is hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, went live in June 2009 ([www.sanitationyear2008.org](http://www.sanitationyear2008.org)).

14. During the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN-Water Task Force on Gender and Water held a panel discussion on challenges and opportunities in gender-sensitive national sanitation policies. The panel discussion drew special attention to the importance of meeting sanitation challenges effectively by adopting and implementing gender-sensitive national sanitation policies and it called for expanding access to sanitation to at least 120 million women worldwide during the Year.

15. Also at that session, WaterAid, UN-Habitat and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation held a side event to discuss their paper “Sanitation: a human rights imperative”, which explained the benefits of using rights-based principles in addressing the sanitation crisis and outlined priorities for Governments, international organizations and civil society.

16. In recognition of the Year and to highlight the importance of sanitation to human development, the United Nations University’s International Network on Water, Environment and Health held a workshop in Hamilton, Canada, on 20 and 21 October 2008. The event included keynote addresses by several prominent experts in the field and featured the German Toilet Organization exhibition “Sanitation is dignity”.

17. On 2 and 3 December 2008, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Task Force on Gender and Water) and the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development held an expert group meeting on gender-disaggregated data on water and sanitation to take stock of the state of such data at the global and regional levels and to identify obstacles in the area of gender-disaggregated data collection and capacity. Recommendations were made on policies, practices and priorities to improve the state of gender-disaggregated data. The expert group meeting also developed a set of gendered indicators on water and sanitation. These indicators could be adopted by global-level data-collection entities, such as the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, to enhance gender-sensitive policy formulation, institutional capacity-building and the measurement and monitoring of the impact of water and sanitation projects and programmes on women and girls.

18. With financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency, the United Nations Development Programme launched a programme entitled “GoAL-WaSH” (which stands for governance, advocacy and leadership for water, sanitation and hygiene). This strategic programme aims at helping States lagging in the attainment of Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation to identify key gaps and weaknesses in their water and sanitation governance structures and to design targeted interventions to fill a gap, and build capacity for more effective water and sanitation governance systems. To date, GoAL-WaSH sector assessments have been carried out in six countries (Madagascar, Mali, Nepal, Paraguay, Sierra Leone and Zambia), and project proposals have been developed for two of those countries (Madagascar and Paraguay).

19. In Brazil, Iraq, and Jamaica, the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme continued the implementation of a number of projects aimed at improving access to water supply and wastewater treatment.

20. On 14 March 2008, WSSCC formally launched the Global Sanitation Fund, which brought attention to the need for innovative financing mechanisms in the sector. The Fund aims at safe and sustainable sanitation for a large number of people and the adoption of good hygiene practices, especially among women, girls and the poor in rural and peri-urban areas. The Fund is the first global financing mechanism to focus expenditure on sanitation and hygiene. Both symbolically and in practice, the Fund represents one of the major initiatives of the Year.

21. The Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing organized the first ever Global Hand-washing Day in support of the Year. Over 85 countries participated in the event, which focused on raising awareness among schoolchildren of the importance of hand-washing with soap. Almost 200 million children took part in events around the world. That response exceeded expectations. In the coming years, the focus will be on behavioural change.

22. The International Water Association (IWA) also co-organized a hand-washing campaign in connection with the Year. The campaign was part of the World Water Monitoring Day initiative that IWA is implementing with the Water Environment Federation. In 2008, more than 75,000 people from over 70 countries participated in World Water Monitoring Day. The hand-washing campaign involved sending out hand-washing kits to organizations worldwide.

23. On 20 March 2008, hundreds of international and national initiatives commemorated World Water Day 2008, which had as its theme “Sanitation matters for all”. The lead agencies for 2008 were WHO and UNICEF, which organized events and developed advocacy and media materials for the Day. For example, in New York and Geneva, a World Water Day event entitled “Stand up for those who can’t sit down” was held. In the Dominican Republic, a day of awareness-raising was arranged with visits to water treatment plants, beach clean-up activities and a children’s drawing contest. In Sierra Leone, a discussion forum with panellists was organized at which participants took part in discussions on different sanitation topics. In many countries, World Water Day was used to formally launch the Year, and events presided by ministers, prime ministers and presidents were held.

24. In recognition of the Year, the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme issued in July 2008 a data update focused on sanitation. The update included newly disaggregated sanitation data that provided valuable insights into how progress was being made. The Joint Monitoring Programme also issued several regional “snapshots” of water and sanitation data with a view to enabling advocacy and planning. Two of those documents were specifically on sanitation (“Sanitation in Africa” and “Sanitation in South Asia”). The Joint Monitoring Programme is the global mechanism for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal target on improved sanitation and drinking water (the drinking water target being to halve the number of people lacking improved drinking water sources). As such, the Joint Monitoring Programme is the international authority on sanitation coverage and thus it is critical that its indicators are robust and that it receives adequate institutional and financial support.

25. In recognition of the importance of sanitation for a cleaner and healthier environment, WHO, the Alliance for Healthy Cities and the World Toilet Organization presented awards in 2008 to two cities of the Republic of Korea that had won an international competition for the best sanitary facilities in a region.

26. In conjunction with the Year, UNICEF sought to consolidate and strengthen its approaches to sanitation and advocated internally for increased focus on and investment in sanitation. To that end, a meeting on community-based approaches to sanitation was held in July 2008, and consensus on key principles and strategies was achieved. UNICEF now has a vision document, entitled “Community approaches to total sanitation”, and the momentum provided by the Year has seen a massive uptake and increased focus, with over 40 countries rapidly scaling up their programmes in 2008.

27. WaterAid collaborated with a broad range of partners to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the Year. Working at different levels, WaterAid participated in successful events and activities to counter the neglected situation of sanitation and reposition the sector as a critical developmental building block. At the international level, WaterAid focused on the Group of Eight summit held in 2008 in Japan, submitting a petition containing 1 million signatures to the Government of Japan and forming “toilet queues” outside Japanese embassies around the world. Regionally, WaterAid participated in the various sanitation conferences to build regional momentum for national-level progress on sanitation. WaterAid helped organize a civil society gathering at which a candle light vigil was held in memory of the 1 million children who had died from diarrhoea in South Asia in the past two years. At the national level, in the 17 countries where WaterAid

works, various campaigning activities were conducted under the banner of the “End water poverty” campaign (an international coalition of over 120 civil society organizations and networks).

28. German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Stockholm Environment Institute formed, together with organizations active in the area of sanitation, an open network on sustainable sanitation to support the Year. The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA), whose secretariat is located in Germany, aims to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by promoting sanitation systems that take into consideration all aspects of sustainability, raise awareness of sustainable sanitation solutions and promote those solutions on a large scale. The Alliance also highlights the key role of sanitation in achieving an entire series of Millennium Development Goals by showing how sustainable sanitation systems should be planned with the participation of all stakeholders and should be pursued in tandem with hygiene promotion. The overall aim is to promote a paradigm shift to reuse-oriented sanitation approaches without compromising health. During the Year, over 100 organizations joined the Alliance.

29. The newsfeed Sanitation Updates was set up to promote the Year by disseminating news, information and resources. The service provides daily updates and is maintained by the International Rescue Committee’s International Water and Sanitation Centre and the United States Agency for International Development’s Environmental Health Knowledge Management Activity and Hygiene Improvement Project. The service will continue in support of the goal of achieving sanitation for all.

30. The World Toilet Association was established in November 2007 in Seoul, with the main objective of helping poor communities to gain sustained access to water supply and sanitation services. The Association initiated a public toilet-building pilot project that included the construction of toilets in public areas in nine countries in Africa and Asia. The selected sites represented areas where improved sanitation was desperately needed.

#### **IV. Regional initiatives**

31. The importance of securing political commitment to sanitation at all levels was widely recognized and five regional ministerial conferences on sanitation were organized in support of the Year. Those conferences sought to raise the awareness of ministers and senior Government officials of the need for urgent action on sanitation. Discussion forums were held and enjoyed a high level of participation by Governments, and agreements were reached on declarations signed by Governments calling for action and agreeing on their commitments to sanitation improvements in their respective countries.

32. In conjunction with the ministerial conferences, many technical workshops and side meetings were held by a number of organizations and groups, including the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance. The Institute of Development Studies of the United Kingdom organized meetings and workshops on community-led total sanitation and WSSCC organized various workshops for the media. In advance of the Third South Asia Conference on Sanitation, WaterAid organized, with some of its partners, a civil society pre-meeting, and it organized a panel discussion with UNICEF at the



2008 Labour Party conference in the United Kingdom, at which the Minister for Development was present.

33. The Latin American Conference on Sanitation (LatinoSan 2007) was held in Cali, Colombia from 12 to 16 November 2007, and was jointly organized by the Research and Development Institute in Water Supply, Environmental Sanitation and Water Resources Conservation (CINARA) and Del Valle University of Colombia, UNICEF, WHO, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank. LatinoSan 2007 was the first Latin American conference devoted to this topic at the ministerial level, and was attended by participants from 22 countries; it represented one of the most relevant efforts in Latin America to mobilize human and financial resources to address the sanitation crisis in the region. The central objective was to raise the political profile of sanitation and hygiene at the national and regional levels. LatinoSan 2007 resulted in the adoption of the Cali Declaration, in which the signatory States agreed to prioritize sanitation in national development policies, support the achievement of the main objectives of the Year and strengthen intergovernmental cooperation in the region.

34. The Second African Conference on Sanitation and Hygiene (AfricaSan+5) was held in Durban, South Africa, from 18 to 21 February 2008, under the auspices of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and its partners the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry of South Africa, the African Development Bank, UNICEF, the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank, WSSCC and WHO. Representatives of over 50 African States were in attendance. The main objective of the Conference was to move sanitation and hygiene to the top of the development agenda in Africa and to assess progress, challenges and lessons learned towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation. Participants agreed on an action plan that articulates critical actions to be further developed, funded and monitored by 2010 in order to put Africa back on track to meeting the sanitation target.

35. At the conclusion of the Conference, Ministers signed the eThekweni Declaration and pledged to create separate budget lines for sanitation and hygiene in their countries and to commit at least 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product to that sector. AMCOW was mandated to monitor progress against the national plans and report on such progress at the next conference, in 2010. The Conference also marked the formal launch of the Year in Africa. An exercise to monitor the status of assumed commitments was undertaken in October by AMCOW and its partners in East Africa and further meetings are planned for other subregions in Africa.

36. The Third South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN III), organized by the Government of India, was held in New Delhi from 19 to 21 November 2008, with the theme "Sanitation for dignity and health". Eight South Asian States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) participated at the ministerial level. The Conference was opened by the Prime Minister of India, who stated that sanitation should be the birthright of every citizen of South Asia. At the Conference, discussions were held on four main issues: sanitation and sustainability; sanitation and development; sanitation beyond toilets; and institutions and partnerships for sanitation. The Conference concluded with the signing of the Delhi Declaration in which States confirmed their commitment to

achieving the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation and recognized that access to sanitation was a human right.

37. The Caribbean Workshop on Sanitation (CARIBSAN 2008), jointly organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank was held in Kingston on 28 and 29 April 2008. The topic of the regional meeting was “Integration of sanitation policies in national development plans in the Caribbean region”. Representatives of 11 States reached consensus on a set of recommendations for improving sanitation, in particular through the formulation and implementation of sanitation policies involving all stakeholders, and adopted the Kingston Declaration, in which they called for real commitments to develop national sanitation policies, ensuring increased financial support to facilitate sustained progress through national budget commitments and increasing the awareness and commitment of actors at all levels. A committee was established to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations.

38. The East Asia Ministerial Conference on Sanitation and Hygiene (EASAN 2007), organized jointly by the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank, WHO, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UNICEF, was held in Beppu, Japan, on 30 November and 1 December 2007. The Conference brought together ministers of 15 States to discuss options for accelerating national action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation in East Asia. In the declaration adopted at the Conference, States pledged to boost investment in sanitation and hygiene and provide strong leadership for action. The case was made for sanitation as an economic investment and was backed by a call to strengthen the mechanism for monitoring investment and results in sanitation as an essential condition of achieving the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation. The Conference outcomes were reported to the Asia-Pacific Water Summit held in Beppu, Japan, on 3 and 4 December 2007. The Summit brought together 10 Heads of State from over 35 countries in Asia and the Pacific as well as representatives of regional water and sanitation institutions.

39. A ministerial declaration on water supply and sanitation in small rural settlements in the Black Sea region was agreed in May 2009 during a regional ministerial conference held in Sofia. The declaration contains a set of recommendations for Governments to spur action in financing, innovative solutions, education and transboundary and regional cooperation for improved sanitation coverage and sustainable water supply.

40. At the African regional level, an African Union summit was held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February 2008. At the summit, Heads of State and Government adopted a decision on the Millennium Development Goals in which they specifically welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General and other partners to hold meetings on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2008 to find ways to reinforce the partnership between developed and developing countries. In anticipation of those meetings, they agreed to make water and sanitation the theme of the African Union summit to be held in July 2008. Participants also recognized that in addition to marking the midpoint between the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the 2015 target date, the year 2008 was crucial for converting previous declarations and commitments into new, seven-year national and regional action plans and implementation strategies.

41. The eleventh ordinary session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 30 June and 1 July 2008, with the theme “Meeting the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation”. The summit generated significant commitments with regard to water and sanitation in Africa. In the declaration entitled “Sharm el-Sheikh Commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa”, African leaders committed to increasing their efforts in the area of water and sanitation and raising the profile of sanitation by addressing the gaps in the context of the eThekweni Declaration. In particular, they agreed to develop and update national policies, regulatory frameworks and programmes and to prepare national strategies and action plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals targets on water and sanitation over the next seven years.

42. As part of the follow-up to the implementation of the outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, the Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized, in partnership with the African Union Office for Southern Africa, the Secretariat of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Development Bank, a training seminar on water and sanitation in the Southern African Development Community: innovative approaches for resource mobilization and policy implementation. The seminar, held in Lusaka from 10 to 13 December 2008, provided the participants from 15 States with a better understanding of the challenges ahead and the roles they were expected to play. Because of the significant lag in most African countries with regard to meeting the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation, ECA has designed a mechanism to enhance collaboration between the organizations of the United Nations system working in this sphere in Africa and national actors in the assessment of community and national needs (including costing and resource mobilization from internal and external sources) for follow-up on meeting the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation.

43. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean organized various events in support of the Year, including a seminar on international investment agreements, sustainability of investments in infrastructure and regulatory and contractual measures, which was held in Lima from 14 to 16 January 2009. The objective of the seminar was to exchange experiences with regard to the impact of international investment agreements and their implications for the formulation of public policy for, inter alia, private investment in the provision of sanitation services.

44. In support of the Year, ESCAP conducted a survey of member States on good practices and lessons learned in the area of member sanitation improvements. The survey findings were presented and discussed at a regional workshop on institutional changes required to meet the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation, organized by ESCAP and held in Macao, China, in November 2008, back to back with the World Toilet Summit and Expo. States from the region reached a consensus on key institutional changes needed to meet the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation, including decentralization of sanitation funds and empowerment of local communities and civil society. Adequate support for the extreme poor was also identified as a key requirement.

45. Within the framework of the mutual efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States, to follow up

on the agreed goals for sustainable development, ESCWA issued a regional assessment report entitled "Sustainable water supply and sanitation for all: regional assessment report on the status and achievements of ESCWA member countries towards improved water supply and sanitation. At a high-level meeting held in Cairo in July 2008, to follow up on the findings of the report, senior Government officials responsible for water and sanitation endorsed the report with their full support.

46. WHO organized a regional workshop on ecological sanitation, held in Kathmandu from 22 to 25 September 2008. Representatives of Bhutan, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste gathered to review the state of sanitation in South-East Asia and shared experiences about the approaches and challenges they faced in promoting the sanitation programme.

## **V. National initiatives**

47. At the national level, the Year provided an opportunity to put the issue of sanitation in the spotlight and generated considerable awareness. Worldwide many advocacy and awareness-raising events were held at the national, provincial, village, school and community levels. Those activities involved children, communities, traditional and religious leaders, Government officials, non-governmental organizations, politicians, celebrities, sports figures and members of royalty. The immensely varied and innovative activities undertaken all sought to raise awareness of the urgent need for sanitation improvements and to lift the taboo surrounding sanitation.

48. Many countries organized sanitation days, weeks or months. In the Gambia and Timor-Leste, the events were launched by the Vice-President. Afghanistan, Burundi, Eritrea, Mauritania, Pakistan and the Philippines organized awareness-raising weeks. In Nepal, one such event resulted in the commitment of 601 parliamentarians to include sanitation as a basic human right in the Constitution.

49. Media workshops and briefings were held in over 40 countries, with the media kits designed for the Year being used to train and orient journalists and other media experts in sanitation. All States reported enhanced media coverage of sanitation and the objectives of the Year.

50. An array of training events and workshops on sanitation advocacy and awareness-raising were held in over 60 countries for Government officials, political leaders, non-governmental organizations and traditional leaders. These included meetings held in Colombia for municipalities and provincial training events in Bhutan, Burundi, Ethiopia and Indonesia. In addition, many States reported having organized various technical training activities on sanitation.

51. One major outcome of the Year was the number of partnerships and coalitions for sanitation forged at the country level. These included partnerships between Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, organizations of the United Nations system, the private sector and the media. Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Guatemala, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Suriname and Viet Nam all reported on such enhanced partnerships for sanitation. Many States, including Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Mauritania and the United Republic of Tanzania, also reported on inter-ministerial coordination for sanitation.

52. In several States, sanitation was included for the first time in national policies and strategies, and strategic plans for sanitation were also developed. There was a notable increase during the year on policy-level work in the area of sanitation in many States, including Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, China, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Djibouti, Eritrea, the Gambia, Guyana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania. This is one of the measurable outcomes of the regional ministerial declarations; early information from monitoring mechanisms in some regions indicates good progress in this area.

53. Investment by Governments and donors in sanitation also increased during 2008. In Afghanistan, the Government allocated for the first time funds for hygiene and sanitation. Sanitation budget increases were reported by China, Djibouti, Iraq and Nepal. Nigeria, Pakistan, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam reported on increased resources available through UNICEF for sanitation. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Government of Japan increased their allocations to the sector. The Gambia has developed a budget tracking system for the sanitation sector to be implemented in 2009.

54. Some specific examples of national-level activities and outcomes related to the Year are described in the following paragraphs. These include actions and commitments undertaken by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, international organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and individuals.

55. In Afghanistan, a concept of "clean villages" was developed and subsequently introduced in all 34 provinces. A women's toilet elements production and training centre was opened at which female masons produced over 60 latrine slabs under the guidance of a trainer. The project is also aimed at income diversification and improved marketing.

56. In Angola, the Ministry of the Environment established a new national technical unit for environmental sanitation, and a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNICEF and the Ministry of Urban Development and Planning for the provision of technical assistance to the unit for implementation of the recommendations of the national workshop on sanitation.

57. The Government of Australia pledged to increase by five times overseas aid to the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) campaign of WSSCC, doubling the proportion spent on sanitation. A major regional conference on sanitation and water was held in October in Melbourne. A WASH policy has been formulated that places greater emphasis on sanitation. The Parliament Secretary, the WASH reference group, academics and AusAID played a key role throughout the Year.

58. In Bangladesh, the Government, development partners, non-governmental organizations and the private sector joined together in a common platform and agreed to work together to reach the Millennium Development Goals. The Department of Public Health Engineering, with the support of UNICEF and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, implemented sanitation, hygiene education and water supply projects in 19 districts. Environment and social development officers received briefings and training on the Year, in particular on five messages and on gender, poverty and social issues.

59. As an outcome of the Year, Benin officially declared 15 April as National Health and Hygiene Day.

60. In Burkina Faso, the Year enabled women's groups, people affected by AIDS and youth to take part in the sanitation discussion. The Minister of the Environment declared 22 November as Clean City Day. The Minister of Agriculture, Water and Fishery Resources announced significant allocations for sanitation and hygiene, particularly in rural areas which previously had received no specific allocations from the budget. An amount equivalent to US\$ 1.3 million was included in the 2008 budget for institutional sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion in rural areas, and the allocation for sanitation in urban areas was increased by 40 per cent, to US\$ 1 million equivalent.

61. In Cambodia, children were given special attention in hygiene and sanitation education activities throughout the Year. Sanitation issues were promoted during the National Water Festival in November 2008. In addition, the National Sanitation Forum was launched in conjunction with provincial sanitation campaigns.

62. In China, a national strategic sanitation forum was held and the Minister of Health proposed the integration of rural sanitation into the new socialist countryside (NSC) policy. The Government has started to build a rural sanitation monitoring and evaluation system and has increased budgetary funding for rural sanitation.

63. A forum on "eco-toilets" was held in Chengdu, China, in late 2008 and resulted in a joint statement on promised action to improve sanitation in China. The event was attended by 78 non-governmental organizations, 8 foundations and 15 universities, and comprised three components: a pilot project ("Water drop village"), an international forum and a joint stakeholder announcement on eco-toilet action. The pilot project aimed to construct 108 eco-toilets and was expected to be completed by January 2009.

64. The Czech Republic concentrated its efforts on better control of wastewater discharges, upgrading of infrastructure and building of new facilities. One priority was to reduce pollution discharges through the construction, modernization and intensification of wastewater treatment plants, associated with the construction of sewerage systems. World Water Day 2008 was observed in Prague with broad-based participation by water authorities and various stakeholders. In addition, regional water days were organized around the country.

65. In Egypt, a comprehensive sanitation project covering three major districts is being implemented by the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Irrigation, the World Bank and Dutch Development Aid. The project aims at evaluating comprehensive watershed management, including water for drinking, irrigation, agriculture and sanitation. The Government anticipates that by the end of the current five-year development plan, the national sanitation system capacity will have increased by 80 per cent.

66. In Eritrea, a sanitation week was organized with the theme "To sustain the development of our nation, let's invest in sanitation" and included official launching ceremonies in six regions of the country, advocacy seminars, the declaration of the first open-defecation-free village, an online panel discussion on sanitation and hygiene, a demonstration and awareness campaign of Global Hand-washing Day in schools, sports activities, pilot projects and much more. National promotional

materials were developed and sanitation was recognized as a key priority in the health sector.

67. In Ethiopia, a national sanitation and hygiene festival was held in December, in cooperation with the WASH campaign of WSSCC, to celebrate the achievements of the Year. The festival was attended by 300 participants representing the Government, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media, professional associations, higher education institutions and schools. To commemorate Global Hand-washing Day at the national level, more than 100,000 bars of soap and eight water tankers were donated by private soap and plastic manufacturers. The Ministry of Health has included the promotion of sanitation and hygiene in its core plan for the current fiscal year, requiring every district to develop its own action plan. To add political impetus, a national workshop (EthioSan 2008) was held.

68. Fiji organized a side event during the Pacific Water Conference held in Apia, Samoa, from 9 to 11 September 2008, to review the Pacific Wastewater Policy Statement and Framework for Action (2001). This ensured regional attendance for the review process.

69. In Germany, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development issued a publication on sanitation and organized a meeting of non-governmental organizations on the issue of sanitation. The Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation and the United Nations Association of Germany launched a German-language website on the Year (<http://www.dgvn.de/sanitaerjahr2008.html>).

70. As a follow-up to CARIBSAN 2008, Jamaica established a programme based on the recommendations of the Conference and focused on finalizing of the sanitation policy and establishing a national sanitation task force to guide the integration of the plan for improved sanitation into the implementation of the Vision Jamaica 2030 national development plan. The task force will strengthen the focus on sanitation and hygiene through an expanded rural water programme within the housing policy that is being developed.

71. In Japan, the Year was promoted actively through various events prior to and throughout the year, including the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in Yokohama, Japan, from 28 to 30 May 2008. At the Conference, the Government announced its intention to provide grant aid totalling JPY 30 billion for technological cooperation, with the view to providing 6.5 million people with safe drinking water and assisting with human resources development. Financial support in the amount of US\$ 11.4 million was provided for water, sanitation and hygiene emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Kenya, Myanmar, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

72. The Government of Japan also supported projects of local non-governmental organizations to improve sanitation, in particular in Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, and implemented grass-roots projects to improve sanitation in schools.

73. In addition, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in Japan, together with relevant organizations, established the Committee for International Cooperation in the Sewerage Sector. Participants in the Committee discussed strategies to strengthen international cooperation in coordination with the private sector, academia and Governments and adopted an action plan for the creation of a global centre for urban sanitation.

74. In March 2008, the Japan Toilet Association held an international workshop on programmes to support school sanitation facilities to protect children's health. In April 2008, the Japan Committee for UNICEF held a corporate social responsibility seminar on saving children's lives through a sanitary environment. In partnership with the Committee, Oji Nepia Co. Ltd. launched the 1,000 Toilets Project, which will build 1,000 latrines for children in Timor-Leste through UNICEF.

75. In Kenya, the Government created a separate ministry and department specifically for public health and sanitation, which had previously been under the Health Ministry. The combined allocation for health, including the ministries of Medical Services and of Public Health and Sanitation, was increased from US\$ 514 million equivalent to US\$ 537 million equivalent for the current fiscal year.

76. In Mauritania, in preparation for World Water Day, 50 representatives from Nissa Bank — a microcredit union supported by UNICEF with 117,600 women members — held a two-day meeting to discuss sanitation issues.

77. The Government of Mozambique launched in 2008 the National Sanitation Campaign, which focused on promoting four key behaviours: hand-washing with soap, construction and use of latrines, safe water use and disposal of solid waste. To reinforce the Campaign, the community approach to total sanitation was introduced in the 18 districts covered by the One Million Initiative in the Provinces of Manica, Tete and Sofala. The approach included the introduction of sanitation awards and the application of the community-led total sanitation approach. Although only 6,000 latrines had been constructed by June 2008, that figure had risen to over 25,000 by December 2008, thanks to the introduction of the award scheme. In 2008, 143 villages in the three provinces applied for the sanitation award.

78. The Myanmar Motion Picture Organization produced 12 television spots promoting four clean habits (improved sanitation, safe drinking water, clean foods and hand-washing with soap) and 14 short films promoting improved sanitation and good hygiene behaviour. A public-private partnership for the WASH campaign was also established.

79. In Nepal, a dedicated desk was created in order to bring together stakeholders for collective action. A multi-stakeholder process enabled the formulation of a sanitation master plan that describes the country's vision on how to approach and finance sanitation. Several events were organized, such as the first Global Hand-washing Day, Ninth Sanitation Week, a website launch and a number of school sanitation initiatives. A major accomplishment enabled by the efforts relating to the Year was the first-ever allocation of separate funds in the national budget to support sanitation.

80. In Nicaragua, various events were organized including an Earth fair, an international sanitation week, two regional forums, a national press competition with the theme "Sanitation, a priority for Nicaragua" and a radio and television festival on sanitation.

81. In Nigeria, the official launch of the Year was made in conjunction with a meeting of the National Council on Water Resources. Ministers, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders participated in the event, which attracted over 200 people. The year 2009 was declared as the National Year of Sanitation.



82. In Pakistan, the Year was launched at both the national and provincial levels. During the year, a week was devoted to child health and sanitation, at which over 11 million people were reached in six districts. In 10 low-income union councils in the city of Rawalpindi, a rights-based approach to sanitation was promoted. In 45 villages in Vehari District, community-led construction of school toilets and sanitation systems was encouraged.

83. In Peru, the Ministries of Housing, Construction and Sanitation, of Health, and of the Environment, with support from the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank and other partners, organized a national sanitation conference (PERUSAN), to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and develop a shared vision of solutions based on a multisector approach. As part of the conference, the Water and Sanitation Program supported a media capacity-building programme for 30 journalists from regional and local media. In preparation for the national conference, six subnational sanitation conferences were held during the year.

84. In the Philippines, the Second National Sanitation Summit was held on the topic "Improving sanitation for better water quality and safety", in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank. Sustainable Sanitation in East Asia (SuSEA)-Philippines, an agency which aims to increase the access of poor Filipinos to sanitation services, was created by the Departments of Health and of the Environment and Natural Resources, with support from the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank. The Innovative Sanitation Interventions Project Fund was established to stimulate innovative solutions to sanitation and hygiene targeting the poor and other vulnerable groups.

85. In Sri Lanka, ecological sanitation policy and capacity-building were discussed at a workshop held in April 2008. New sanitation designs were implemented in 20 schools. In addition, a poster competition highlighting sanitation problems was organized.

86. In the Sudan, a two-day sanitation promotion workshop was held in South Darfur to raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and to advocate for supportive policies and regulations to promote sanitation.

87. In Timor-Leste, the national launch of the Year was opened by the Vice-President of the Parliament and was attended by more than 500 people. A campaign on good sanitation practices was conducted at the community level, with 2,788 family latrines being constructed.

88. In Ukraine, sanitation issues were promoted through a contest for journalists entitled "Safe sanitation for every citizen of Ukraine". A film about water and sanitation was produced, and posters on sanitation were placed in the Water Museum in Kyiv.

89. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a national policy on sanitation and hygiene and a national strategic plan on water, sanitation and hygiene at schools were developed. The National Steering Committee for Sanitation and Hygiene was established to guide actions on sanitation. WaterAid organized a sanitation workshop for media that was jointly facilitated by the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank and the national WASH coalition. The Government increased annual funding to the sector from US\$ 1 million equivalent to almost US\$ 10 million equivalent. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare began developing a

national sanitation and hygiene policy and is issuing guidelines to all districts on how to implement sanitation and hygiene activities.

90. In Viet Nam, during the Year, UNICEF increased its budget for sanitation and hygiene from US\$ 660,000 to US\$ 800,000. In six provinces, the budget for sanitation increased from 10 per cent to 30 per cent, funded by the Netherlands, AusAID and Danish International Development Assistance through the National Target Program. The National Rural Sanitation Working Group was established to focus on the issue of sanitation.

91. In Yemen, the Year resulted in an extensive partnership with the private sector: about 10,000 bars of soap were distributed by the Unilever group. Other companies in the private sector also contributed to this campaign, such as Shamlan, which produced 5 million bottles of mineral water with a hand-washing logo.

92. In Zambia, a national launch was hosted by the Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company and opened by representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing and UNICEF. A national debate on sanitation issues was organized and campaigns were carried out, including the "Make Zambia clean and healthy" campaign and an evidence-based awareness and advocacy campaign against the use of lime in cholera mitigation strategies.

## **VI. Conclusions**

93. In terms of the three main expected results (awareness-raising, political buy-in and contributing to achievement of the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation), the activities of the Year in many ways exceeded expectations. The momentum created at the global level, with the launch and various media- and organization-specific events, has slowly translated into activities and activism at the regional and national levels that are expected to continue well after the end of the Year. Beyond events and publications, the message of the Year, i.e. that sanitation matters and is an important development issue, has taken root around the world.

94. Not only did the Year provide an opportunity to put the issue of sanitation in the spotlight, it galvanized the efforts and thinking of the international community to work more effectively and coherently. The Year effectively provided the structure, guidance and support to design and launch meaningful national and regional events targeted at politicians, decision makers and the general public.

95. The Year attracted widespread interest and inspired a range of actions and partnerships in the area of sanitation. It also prompted action by international organizations, development banks, governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, sanitation experts and practitioners, artists and private citizens.

96. The basic purpose of the Year was to foster awareness-raising, advocacy and outreach. It is now important to build on the outputs of the Year and turn commitments into sustained action if the development goals are to be fully met. This can be achieved if the strong partnerships forged during the Year are maintained. It will take several years before the measurable impact of Year can be ascertained in terms of accelerated access to basic sanitation. A clear picture will emerge in 2012 when the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme is expected to assess data up to 2010.

97. Sanitation is a national development priority and requires the design and implementation of strong, gender-sensitive national policies and programmes. Governments should provide sanitation with an institutional “home” in order to strengthen networking among national and local authorities responsible for water, sanitation, health, the environment, education and finance.

98. The Year essentially focused on basic sanitation and did not encompass wastewater and water reuse issues. It is important to advocate for a broader view of sanitation that includes wastewater treatment. The importance of transferring and disseminating low-cost sanitation and wastewater treatment and reuse technologies cannot be overemphasized. The exchange of information on best practices among countries and the transfer of appropriate low-cost technologies should be promoted through technical training, simple manuals and capacity-building, with support from international and bilateral development agencies. There is equally a strong need to further identify and scale up innovative pro-poor approaches. In this connection, small-scale providers and entrepreneurs can play a significant role.

99. In general, capacity-building, education and training could be better targeted in such areas as technology, institutional development (including human resources), tariff and subsidy schemes, wastewater management, regulatory reform and financial management.

100. Most developing countries cannot achieve their sanitation goals and targets without the cooperation and support of the international donor community. Donor countries can assist developing countries by allocating higher portions of official development assistance to sanitation programmes, encouraging innovation, providing more financial assistance in the form of grants and improving donor coordination in implementation efforts.

101. For low-income countries with low levels of sanitation coverage, meeting the target may require that public spending is focused on basic, low-cost sanitation facilities for those currently without access, leveraging household and community investments. Microcredit programmes, which were originally intended for investment in income-generating activities, should be expanded to include housing improvements, such as water supply and sanitation.

102. Public-private partnerships can also play a role in financing and developing sanitation infrastructure. Efforts to mobilize large-scale private sector investment for urban sewerage and wastewater treatment systems in developing countries have been limited and should be encouraged.

103. Effective sanitation management requires strengthened systems to monitor the management of wastewater and water quality. The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme methodology and data collection for estimating sanitation coverage should be strengthened and supported to provide better global, regional and national information to assess progress towards the Millennium Development Goal target on sanitation. To help secure equitable access and to enhance gender-sensitive policy formulation, institutional capacity-building and the measurement and monitoring of the impact of water and sanitation projects and programmes on women and girls, the Joint Monitoring Programme needs to incorporate robust gender-disaggregated data.

104. Monitoring sanitation is a challenge, even more so than monitoring water, and progress at the national level will be key. National monitoring systems are often weak, yet they are the basis for planning for progress and policy formulation. Data-collection capabilities could benefit from capacity-building.