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## SACOSAN VI, The Dhaka Declaration (2016)

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## **SIXTH SOUTH ASIAN CONFERENCE ON SANITATION**

**“Better Sanitation Better Life”**

**11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> January 2016, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

### **THE DHAKA DECLARATION**

**We**, the Heads of Delegations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participating in the 6<sup>th</sup> South Asian Conference on Sanitation, (SACOSAN-VI) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, January 11-13, 2016, which was attended by Ministers, State and Deputy Ministers, Civil Servants, Civil Society, Academia, Development Partners, Private Sector, adolescents, differently-abled men and women and sanitation workers:

- (1) Endorse the ambition and interdependence of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and clearly outline the importance of sanitation and hygiene as crucial for achieving Goals 1, 2,3,4,5,6,8 and 10 in South Asia;
- (2) Appreciate the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and recognize that this will require a new vision, strategies, stronger systems and more diverse participation;
- (3) Understand that while the SACOSAN process has contributed immensely to the progress of sanitation in South Asia, highlighting hygiene, equity and sustainability aspects of sanitation, the region needs to accelerate sanitation coverage and hygiene behavior change to achieve SDG target 6.2;
- (4) Recognize that urban sanitation, unreached people and areas, hygiene issues, sanitation in public places, and resilience of sanitation facilities to climate change need greater attention;
- (5) Appreciate the contribution of different stakeholders towards increasing the diversity of participation and achieving the objectives of the SACOSAN process;
- (6) Reaffirm past SACOSAN commitments made between 2003 and 2013.

#### **SACOSAN VI unanimously resolves and commits to:**

1. The achievement of the SDG target 6.2: By 2030, to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations;
2. Strengthen the enabling environment including but not limited to, revised national policies, strategies, well-resourced plans reflecting the new SDG target and indicator(s) leading to better sanitation and hygiene outcomes. Call on external financing agencies to increase their support, where required, to national sanitation and hygiene plans through financial and technical assistance;
3. Prioritize the poorest and most marginalized, bridging the gaps in access to and use of appropriate sanitation and hygiene services for children, adolescents, women,

differently-abled people, or those excluded due to age, caste, ethnicity, religion or gender, living in hard to reach areas or affected by disasters. Prioritize menstrual hygiene management for women and girls;

4. Encourage people driven approaches and emphasize credible country-level mechanisms for monitoring key outcomes such as improvements in sanitation coverage, achievement of open defecation-free households and communities, equitable and sustainable delivery of services including solid and liquid waste management and hygiene behaviour change;
5. Emphasize urban sanitation and address sanitation and hygiene gaps especially in underserved or unserved settlements and poor urban neighbourhoods; solid and liquid waste management, faecal sludge management and the involvement of urban local bodies and communities;
6. Develop and implement standards and a regulatory framework, wherever required, to ensure the dignity, adequate remuneration, occupational health and safety of sanitation workers (involved in solid and liquid waste management), including those working in the informal sector;
7. Promote continual learning and sharing of experiences and innovations between and within countries by various mechanisms including: i. A functional and dynamic SACOSAN Secretariat in Sri Lanka by 2018; ii. An ICWG with an expanded role to enhance knowledge exchange and learning between meetings; iii. Relevant research and development; iv. Appropriate use of information technology and traditional and new forms of media;
8. Promote sanitation and hygiene in relevant regional forums including the next SAARC summit and the implementation of the SAARC regional action framework for sanitation;
9. Actively involve local bodies, young people, school children, marginalized groups, especially women and girls, differently-abled persons, civil society, media, academia and the private sector in the SACOSAN process at all stages and levels, and in the acceleration of sanitation and hygiene outcomes in the region;
10. Progressively ensure adequate, inclusive and safe institutional sanitation and hygiene, including but not limited to educational and health facilities, transport hubs, market and work places;
11. Promote environmentally sound, climate resilient safe sanitation facilities.

We express our profound appreciation to the Government and People of Bangladesh for their excellent hosting of this event and for their generosity and hospitality.

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

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Eng. Atiqullah Khawasi, Honorable Deputy Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

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Mr. Abdul Malek, Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Dr. Pandup Tshering, Director, Department of Public Health, Royal Government of Bhutan

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Chaudhary Birender Singh, Honorable Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of the Republic of India

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Mr. Abdulla Ziyad, Honourable State Minister for Environment and Energy, Government of the Republic of Maldives

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Mr. Suresh Prakash Acharya, Secretary, Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

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Mr. Shuja Alam, H.E. High Commissioner, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Bangladesh

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Mr. Rauf Hakeem, Honorable Minister, Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

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