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Fifth South Asian Conference on Sanitation

The Kathmandu Declaration (2013)

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5th SOUTH ASIAN CONFERENCE ON SANITATION
22 - 24 October 2013
Kathmandu, Nepal
THE KATHMANDU DECLARATION

We, the Heads of Delegation from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, participated in the 5th South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) in Kathmandu, Nepal, which was attended by Ministers, parliamentarians, senior policymakers and implementing agencies; grass-roots activists, children and adolescents; professionals, academia, civil society, non-governmental and community based organizations, development partners, the private sector and the media;

1. *Reconfirm* the principles of policy and good practice set out in the SACOSAN declarations of the last decade in Dhaka, Islamabad, New Delhi, and Colombo;
2. *Renew* our joint commitment to the Human Right to Sanitation adopted by the United Nations and endorsed by SAARC nations to work progressively to achieve an open defecation free and hygienic South Asia, through accessible, affordable, appropriate, acceptable and environmentally safe sanitation and hygiene services that all people can use and maintain with dignity, safety and comfort ;
3. *Commit* to further accelerate sanitation and hygiene behavior change in South Asia to meet the Millennium Development targets and move towards implementing the United Nations Secretary General's Call to Action on Sanitation;
4. *Recognize* sanitation as a matter of justice and equity, with a powerful multiplier effect that unlocks measurable benefits in health, nutrition, education, poverty eradication, economic growth and tourism while also reducing discrimination and empowering communities, especially infants, children, adolescent girls, women, the elderly and people with disabilities, in rural and urban areas;
5. *We recognize that the time for sanitation is now* and that we must capitalize on the strong political will and local leadership and community ownership demonstrated throughout South Asia to boost sanitation coverage and improve hygiene practices substantially by 2015.

SACOSAN V unanimously **agrees and commits** to an open defecation free South Asia by 2023 and to progressively move towards sustainable environmental sanitation. In order to achieve this, we commit to:

- I. *Formulate, develop and implement* adequately resourced national/sub national sanitation and hygiene plans with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) indicators that measure and report on processes and outcomes at every level including households, educational, health, public institutions and workplaces, with disaggregated reporting on gender, age, disability, marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- II. *Create* a framework and enabling environment including policies, strategies and protocols and the conditions for the fulfillment of the need for universal sanitation and hygiene: women and men, children, adolescent girls, people with disabilities and the elderly;
- III. Given that sanitation is about changing social norms, demand creation, *We commit* to addressing diversity in service provision for infants, children, youth, adolescent girls, women and men, people with disabilities, chronically ill and elderly in rural areas and people affected by poverty and disasters further exacerbated by climate change.
- IV. *Recognize* the importance of sustainable environmental sanitation and hygiene in urban areas including solid and liquid waste and faecal sludge management for all urban dwellers, regardless of tenure.



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- V. *Prioritize and promote* child and disabled friendly services and menstrual hygiene management in all public buildings and especially schools, health clinics and reflect and monitor this in standards, design, delivery and monitoring.
 - VI. *Develop and implement* guidelines and standards suitable for child, adolescent and gender and disabled friendly WASH facilities, with compliance indicators on hand washing and menstrual hygiene education and practice;
 - VII. *Raise awareness* at all levels to foster demand and build capacity for sanitation and hygiene including but not limited to youth led movements, pro-poor public private partnerships and the media.
 - VIII. *Engage* the Health sector at all levels in sanitation and hygiene promotion as critical agents of preventive healthcare.
 - IX. *Emphasize* research and development on low-cost, appropriate sanitation products, linked with sanitation marketing and innovative solutions for environmentally sound sanitation systems.
 - X. *Commit* to significant direct participation of children, adolescents, women, the elderly and people with disabilities, as well as decision makers from Health, Education, Environment and Finance to bring their voices clearly into SACOSAN VI and systematically thereafter.

The SACOSAN Decade has improved sanitation and hygiene for hundreds of millions of people in the region. We recognize that the open defecation free state is an intermediate stage in achieving total sanitation, as the region aspires to achieve wider environmental sanitation that includes safe and sustainable waste management and improved personal and food hygiene practices by all;

We further call on

Development banks, external support agencies, civil society and the private sector to increase their support to our efforts, to provide financial and technical assistance for sanitation and hygiene behavior change, coordinating their efforts for maximum synergy and impact in South Asia.

The South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to support the SACOSAN process by adopting the SAARC Regional Action Framework for Sanitation to address the challenge of sanitation and hygiene in the region.

The United Nations to strongly emphasize the importance of sanitation and hygiene as key to reducing inequalities and achieving human development and to clearly articulate sanitation and hygiene within the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

We welcome the offer of Sri Lanka to host the SACOSAN Secretariat and act as a resource, knowledge and learning centre on sanitation and hygiene facilitating coordination, regional and cross regional exchange and sharing, with other regional sanitation meetings while also contributing to research and capacity development in South Asia.

We express our profound appreciation to the Government and People of Nepal for their excellent hosting of the SACOSAN-V conference and for their generosity and hospitality.

We commend the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for its offer to host the next SACOSAN conference in November 2015.

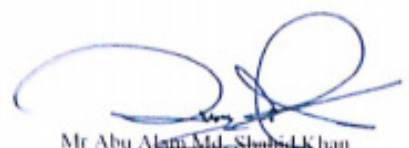
Kathmandu, Nepal, October 24, 2013



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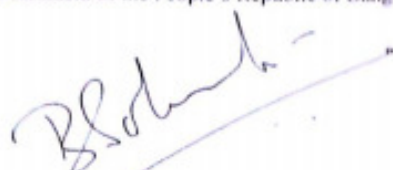
Honorable Atiqullah Khawsi
Deputy Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and
Development
Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



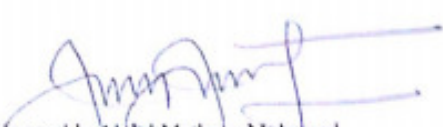
Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shamsul Khan
Secretary, Local Government Division
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development
and Cooperatives
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Mr. Nima Wangdi
Secretary, Minister of Health
Royal Government of Bhutan




Honorable Shri Bharatsinh Madhavsinh Solanki
Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation
Government of the Republic of India



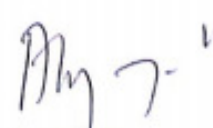
Honorable Abdul Matheen Mohamed
State Minister for Environment and Energy
Government of the Republic of Maldives



Honorable Chhabi Raj Pant
Ministry of Urban Development
Government of the Democratic Federal Republic of
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Honorable Mariyum Aurangzeb
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A. Abeeyunasekara
Secretary, Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage
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