

FIRST SOUTH ASIAN STUDENT CONFERENCE ON
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

"WASH for Healthy Life"

16th – 17th June, 2015
Colombo, Sri Lanka

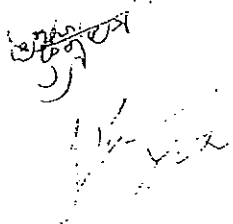
THE COLOMBO DECLARATION

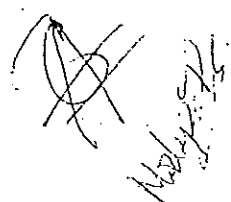
Sri Lanka hosted the first South Asian Student Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) to fulfil a pledge made at the 5th South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) held in Kathmandu in 2013, to mainstream school children and youth involvement in influencing policy and to broaden the knowledge sharing on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. This first South Asian Student Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was held in June, 2015 in Colombo, Sri Lanka which was attended by the H.E. the President, Hon. Prime Minister and Ministers of Sri Lanka and the Student Participants from South Asia, Senior Policymakers, Implementing Agencies, Grass roots Activists, Professionals, Academia, Civil Society, Non-Governmental and Community Based Organizations, Development Partners, Private Sector and Media.

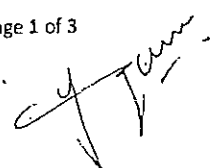
We the representatives of the student delegations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the first South Asian Student Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in June, 2015 declares that;

DRINKING WATER

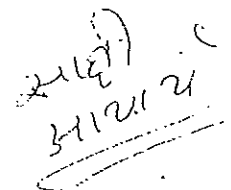
We unanimously identified that water contamination within catchments and during natural disasters, particularly floods, are fast compromising drinking water safety. Ground water sources are increasingly found with excessive chemical substances from natural sources as well as industrial discharges that compromise both acceptance as well as public health. We feel that largely available unprotected dug wells with no boundary wall and apron pose substantial threat on the safety of users while allowing contamination from external environment. When it comes to schools we found lack of drinking water points with a convenient accessibility make the students deprived of sufficient water intake making them less fit for studies. With a view to mitigating these, we recommend to:











1. Declare safe drinking water as a high national priority
2. Formulate clear targets in relation to drinking water with realistic customized options
3. Provide adequate drinking water points in all schools.
4. Enforce the implementation of Rain Water Harvesting
5. Initiate reforestation of vulnerable catchments

SANITATION


We see gaps in regulations, quality and maintenance related to sanitation and irregularity in monitoring. When it comes to sanitary facilities there are serious gaps in menstrual hygiene management as well as access at public places and multi storey school buildings particularly for those with special needs. Lack of attention on sanitation related needs when using public transport is a major discomfort for commuters. The region needs to find improved solutions to dispose human excreta without compromising the safety of both ground and surface water. We clearly see that the region lacking wiliness to update existing attitudes and knowledge on sanitation. In this backdrop we recommend to:

1. Customize sanitation related communication to different audiences.
2. Formulate a strategy to raise public motivation and demand for improved sanitation.
3. Incorporate traditional knowledge of ancestors for environmental friendly disposal of human excreta.
4. Discourage open defecation and build as well as maintain proper toilets which is gender sensitive.

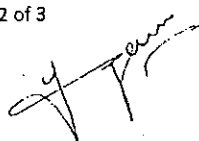
HYGIENE PROMOTION

We find that our region has many myths and misbelievees on hygiene. We are yet to break the silence and promote open discussions such deep rooted as well as culturally sensitive issues. While there is lack of knowledge on specific hygiene related issues such as menstrual hygiene management, we also see there is a gap between knowledge and practice in relation to those who are already knowledgeable. We see a major challenge in allocating dedicated and professional human resources to deal with different aspects of hygiene such as vast expanding food industry and other lifestyle changes. In relation to these we recommend to:

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1. Build capacity of the most grass root level service providers such as local governments.
2. Formulate plans that are action oriented.
3. Promote more practical applications of hygiene related knowledge than concepts.
4. Develop innovative hygiene promotion methodologies especially for menstrual hygiene.

WASH IN SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL HEALTH PROMOTION

We see the inconsistency of the quality of WASH facilities as a major issue in our region. We also have concerns if water available in schools are sufficient enough to cater both drinking and sanitation. It is disappointing to see frequent damages to the WASH facilities by some students regardless of the negative impact it has on all. We also feel that the schools should be free of junk so that the contribution of improved WASH on student nutrition is not compromised. In going forward we recommend to:

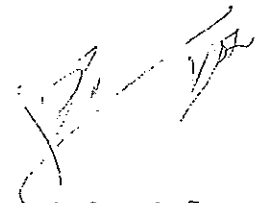
1. Enforce School Health Club/Child Cabinet as the apex body for WASH in School.
2. Develop more interactive and visual behavior promotion rather than lessons.
3. Incorporate social media in School Health Promotion .
4. Accommodate more student led WASH in Schools activities.
5. Adopt field tested models such as 5S in schools .
6. Establish a system for appreciation, rewarding and sanctioning in relation to the use of school WASH facilities.
7. Involve celebrities for promoting WASH in Schools.

Government of Sri Lanka will Promote response of the SACOSAN member county to fulfill the commitments made at the student's Conference.

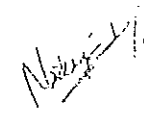
A time frame with milestones to be adopted by the country focal points, to mobilize efforts and resources towards achieving these goals.

Ministries of Education with the relevant Ministries associated with WASH activities will assists students of respective countries in monitoring the progress made under the declaration.


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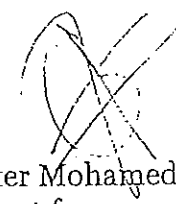
Miss. Sadaf Ishaq Safi
Student from
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



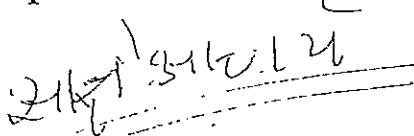
Master Nidup Tshering Dorji
Student from
Kingdom of Bhutan




Miss. Sruthi K. Kumar
Student from
Republic of India



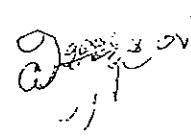
Master Mohamed Eeman Ahmed
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Miss. Sakshi Acharya
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Miss. Zara Fatima Amer
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Master P.M. Aurasu Gayanuwan Jayarathne
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