



# World toilet day

November 19th 2012

## Introduction:

The world toilet day is celebrated on the 19 of November every year. An international NGO called, the World Toilet Organization, working in 58 countries to improve sanitation, has declared November 19 of each year as World Toilet Day. WTO now has 235 NGOs as members and is trying to form a network of global support to influence governments. The objective of the event is to aware and mobilize the communities to use safe methods of disposing-off human excreta and encourage the use of latrines. Over 40 million people or 4.5 percent of the world's total population, which has to respond to the call of nature in the open, lives in Pakistan. The situation in other south Asian countries is also not very promising.

At the current pace the sanitation targets of the country set under MDGs will be met in 13 years which means even by 2028 more than 35 percent people in Pakistan would be living without improved sanitation facilities.

The Human waste is full of disease-causing bacteria contaminating the air, food and water. When the human shit is produced in the open and remains untreated, it interacts with the food chain through soil, water and crops. The open defecation is linked with the spread of polio and is considered to be one of the important challenges the sanitation and health sector is facing.

The lack of govt attention when coupled with poor education and awareness level makes the situation more complicated; the communities sometimes do recognize the importance of latrine but the absence of proper forum where they could find some support is halting their progress.

## The impact of poor sanitation:

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) an estimated 97,900 people die every year due to poor water and sanitation in Pakistan. WHO and Unicef estimated that every year, 54,000 children under age five in Pakistan die from diarrhea caused by poor water and sanitation services. Under-5 mortality is 28 percent higher in rural areas of Pakistan. Water and sanitation related diseases are responsible for some 60 percent of the total number of child mortality cases in Pakistan. The World Bank Strategic Environmental Assessment for Pakistan estimates the total healthcare cost of diarrhea and typhoid, both water and sanitation related diseases, to be Rs112 billion (US\$1.33 billion), or 1.8 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

In addition to child deaths, there is also a major economic cost and impact to countries. Three recent studies in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan on economics of sanitation by World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme reveal that the economic impact of inadequate sanitation in these countries costs 4-6 percent of GDP at 2006 and 2007 prices each year. According to the study, Pakistan loses USD 5.7 billion or 3.9 percent of its GDP annually due to inadequate sanitation.

# The way forward:

There is a need to devise different strategies for rural and urban areas to tackle the issue. “Pakistan approved its national sanitation policy in 2006 (the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Sindh policies yet to be approved) Pakistan also started the Community Led Total Sanitation “CLTS” process in 2004 and followed a “learning by doing” process. But these initiatives were not very successful to achieve the targets first because political leadership is hardly interested in such ‘petty’ issues and second roles of different government departments and ministries involved in water and sanitation were not defined. It is cry of the day to pursue the provincial govt to approve and implement its sanitation policies, institutionalize CLTS and develop a special wing for sanitation in the ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

## The Event:

The integrated Regional Support program being the national secretariat of FANSA Pakistan celebrated the world toilet day in Mardan and requested other provincial chapters to do so. To aware and mobilize the communities to adopt safe disposal of human excreta Latrine models were constructed and placed at busy public places. The informative slogans were printed/pasted on the latrines. The displaying the latrine models was new to the public and showed interest by stopping and reading the text printed on the latrines.

One latrine was placed in the office of Tehsil Municipal Administrator’s office, the TMA staff, public and students were invited on the occasion. While speaking to the audience the FANSA Pakistan staff highlighted the importance of the day and oriented the participants how the use of latrine can bring positive changes in our lives.

A signature campaign was also a part of the celebration. The PETITION was printed on Pana-flex raise the awareness of communities on the importance of water and sanitation and let them know the role of various authorities. People from all walk of life participated in the signature campaign by signing the petition. The signed petition will be sent to the chief minister Khyber Pukhtunkhwa for further action and comments.

