

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Water supply and sanitation were discussed in CSD-13 as priority issues. As we have heard from the distinguished panellists yesterday and today, although the world is making progress, it is not on track to achieve the MDG sanitation target. There are many issues that need to be tackled to ensure that we reach our target. Basic sanitation is a right and although it is a critical issue for all, it especially affects women, youth, and children. Children under the age of 5 are especially vulnerable to curable, waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea.

We applaud the governments for agreeing to review the progress on water and sanitation this year, and we encourage governments to follow up on the lessons learnt this year concretely by agreeing to incorporate water and sanitation into the policy discussions next year. Issues of sanitation can be addressed through a number of avenues including community outreach and education.

In the 1990s a Bangladeshi NGO began a campaign to address sanitation issues in rural areas in the country. They taught communities that unhygienic practices, specifically open defecation, can lead to diarrhoea. More than 600 NGOs, villagers, government agencies, religious organizations and other related agencies used education and awareness campaigns as well as community empowerment to make sanitation a national priority. In addition, education about proper sanitation created demand for low-cost latrines which in turn created opportunities for small businesses. From 1990 to 2004, as sanitation and healthcare improved, studies have shown that for every 1000 live births, there were 40 fewer deaths among infants in Bangladesh.

This case study shows that it only takes one concerted initiative to spark awareness in a community which can then lead to greater stakeholder participation and improve sanitation. However, as the technical guide by UNICEF points out, "people are not empty vessels into which simply new ideas can be poured". Each community's situation is unique and must be considered when developing solutions to poor sanitation. Coherent and long-term educational programs can lead us down the river to sustainable and positive change.

To conclude, a lack of water or sanitation is a loss of dignity and of a fundamental human right. Our goal is for both the CSD and the United Nations to work in harmony to achieve their ultimate goals. It is our privilege and mandate at this session to ensure that sufficient action takes place at this CSD and our goal of universal access to clean drinking water and equitable sanitation will be met. We have the means to solve this problem and it is imperative that we do so. Our common future and our livelihoods especially those of the youth and children depend on it!

Thank you.