



Intervention by Mrs.Riva G.Das, Director, Ministry of External Affairs, on Agenda item 2: Policy options and possible actions to expedite Implementation: a) water; b) sanitation; c) human settlements: Sanitation in the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD-13 on March 2, 2005

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation in the thematic area of sanitation. We associate ourselves with the Statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77.

Providing appropriate sanitation facilities in a country of India's size has always been a challenge, owing to a number of factors, including availability of water, costs, access to technologies and infrastructure, social norms, etc. Increased emphasis has been placed in India on Sanitation during the last two Five Year Plans and there has been considerable success, with one third of rural households and three-quarters of urban households now having Sanitation facilities. A demand-driven approach has been adopted with increased stress on awareness creation and demand generation from the people for sanitary facilities in houses, schools and for cleaner environment. Alternative delivery mechanisms have also been adopted to meet the needs of the community. Rural School Sanitation is a major component and an early point for wider acceptance of sanitation by the rural people. Location specific technology options to meet the customer preferences and location specific, intensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Campaign involving local governments, Co-operatives, Women Groups, Self Help Groups, NGOs etc. are also important elements of the Strategy.

The total sanitation campaign launched in 2001 in India follows a community led and people-centered approach. It is demand-driven, providing for the promotion of a range of simple and cost-effective options to increase the coverage, with particular emphasis on information, education and communication. In our own programmes we have emphasised the gender aspect as women play an important role in hygiene and sanitary decisions, both within the family and within the community.

We feel that a community-based and decentralized model of water and sanitation programmes implemented in a mission-mode approach that has scientific and

democratic temper, aptly supported by technological and other resource inputs, is an effective way to achieve the targets. We, therefore, agree that sanitation and hygiene programmes are more likely to be successful if people are aware of the health and economic benefits arising from improved sanitation and hygiene.

The Secretary-General has, in his report, rightly pointed out that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to this problem. We recognize that national governments and local authorities bear the principal responsibility for reducing the number of people without access to sanitation based on local needs, experience and national priorities. We share the view that ODA can play an important role in assisting developing countries in meeting their sanitation costs. As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report wastewater treatment and re-use is challenging for developing countries because of the high cost and the technical skills required for operation and maintenance. Developing countries are also handicapped by the lack of access to such technologies. Not only is diffusion and transfer of technology important, it is also crucial to enhance technical capacities of developing countries to enable them to adapt and use such technologies.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, for India, it has been an experience of learning by doing. There have been many challenges in the reform process. Shifting from supply-driven policy based on existing institutional rules, practices and arrangements to a demand-responsive, community-led, participatory approach in water and sanitation sector has been one such challenging task. Yet another is the issue of identifying the institutions, vehicles and processes through which the capacities of local governments, both urban and rural, can be strengthened and sustained to meet the objective of providing sanitation for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)