

International Year of Sanitation

Activities planned for WHO South East Asia Region (SEARO)

In line with WHO strategic objectives, SEARO will facilitate the following activities. Major support will be provided to countries where sanitation coverage is very low and capacity is lacking.

- Support member countries in launching IYS at country level.
- Sri Lanka has already launched on 11 December 2007. Nepal launched IYS with a sector-wide media interaction on 2 January 2008. SEARO provided a draft proposal to Maldives for launching it on World Water Day. Country activities will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and water and sanitation (WatSan) sector agencies like UNICEF and national NGOs.
- Develop an information kit for World Water Day 2008 advocating on the benefits and the need to invest on sanitation and hygiene. The kit will be primarily aimed at the health sector and WHO colleagues supporting the primary health care concept and promoting the need for effective collaboration of the local government, health, and WatSan sector for total sanitation.
- Assist countries in developing sanitation road maps, improve policies and strategies, and forge cross-sectoral sanitation alliances. The annual sanitation weeks held in many regional countries is a critical rallying point for this.
- Organise a Regional workshop on Ecological Sanitation (Ecosan) in Nepal. Nepal and India have already piloted Ecosan and results have been positive. The workshop will capture the experiences and also introduce the approach to other countries. WHO guidelines on safe re-use of wastewater, excreta and grey water in agriculture will be disseminated.
- Contribute to the South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) which is to be held in India in late 2008. This will be the third Conference in the process of promoting total sanitation in the South Asia region. Support policy development through regional analysis of the SACOSAN process. At country level, support national SACOSAN chapters to follow-up on commitments made in earlier SACOSAN meetings and prepare for SACOSAN 2008. The participation of Ministers and Senior Civil Servants in SACOSAN offers excellent potential for political level advocacy and inclusion of policy development and funding for sanitation. Follow-up to 1st EASAN that was held in late 2007.
- Support the sanitation campaigns which are ongoing in Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and advocate it to other member countries. Focus is on sanitation at household level from a perspective of health protection and dignity.
- Organise a Regional Sanitation and Health Seminar in Sri Lanka in 2008. The main objective is to promote sanitation and hygiene through the Primary Health Care at local level.
- Support application and translation of WHO guidelines for development of guidelines for water, sanitation and hygiene in schools and health facilities. WSH and HPE Units have already supported Maldives in developing such guidelines in November 2007.