

Intervention by Mr. Abdul Alim, representative of Bangladesh at an interactive discussion on Access to Sanitation on 12 April 2005.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I deeply appreciate you Mr. Chairman for the manner in which you are steering the session. My delegation would also like to thank the distinguished panelists for their informative and thought provoking presentations.

WSSD and Millennium Declaration illustrated the time-bound target for sanitation. It is defined to be the safe management of human excreta and includes both hardware (sanitation technologies such as toilets and hygienic latrines) and software (hygiene promotion, such as hand wash with soap) components. The government of Bangladesh has adopted pragmatic policies targeting both the components. Off-site sanitation which relates to sewerage system requires huge investment. Its development requires donor support in the forms of finance and technology.

Water, sanitation and hygiene issues are inseparably linked. In Bangladesh, as my delegation spelled out in the morning session, lean flow of water in international courses during dry season results in dearth of both surface and sub-surface water. Arsenic contamination in the ground water, which has affected 40 million people is another serious threat. These have exponentially increased our challenges. We hope that these issues would find room in your text.

Sharing experiences and best practices among the comparative milluie as well as transfer of technology could be some of the options for progress. These require both networks for information exchange and skilled technicians to design and market the locally adaptable and low-cost sanitation solutions.

Mr. Chairman,

Awareness building, especially among the rural poor is critically important. The government of Bangladesh and UNICEF, supported by different donors, have initiated a comprehensive programme called "Hygiene awareness and product information campaign" in Bangladesh. A communication initiative named "Meena" has played a remarkable role in awareness building for healthcare, gender parity and child rights in

Bangladesh. A recent report shows that 85% of our children are aware of the Meena story.

NGO and private sector have also important roles to this effect. Microcredit could be a highly effective tool in terms of capacity building, awareness raising and empowerment as well as integrating the poor especially women into the mainstream of the economy. Most importantly, microcredit can make sanitation facilities affordable to the poor.

The target of WSSD and MDGs for sanitation is ambitious and realistic but not easy to achieve. It warrants consolidated political commitment and wills supported by significant financial, technical and human resources. Global community, in the spirit of partnership, made number of commitments in terms of ODA, FDI, market access and debt cancellation for developing countries, particularly the LDCs. These must be honoured.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.