Jajarkot and the perils of under-investing in water and sanitation

Diarrhoea, which is the most noticeable symptom of waterborne illness, can be treated through a combination of antibiotics, oral rehydration solution, a nutritious diet and drinking plenty of treated water. It is critical that trained staff and medical supplies are on hand to treat cases immediately.

Prevention is even better. If we are to break the annual cycle of waterborne illness and fatalities in Nepal, we need to dramatically improve the quality and quantity of water, provide for proper disposal of human waste, and increase awareness of personal and community hygiene. Latrine coverage in the most-affected districts in the mid- and far western regions is 18-25% compared to a national average of 46%.

The UN recognizes that the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) of the Department of Health Services has strengthened epidemic preparedness and response activities in high-risk districts. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is supporting the Ministry with enhanced surveillance activities, pre-positioning of materials and a deployment plan for health professionals investigating and responding to outbreaks. We applaud the Ministries’ recent decision to recall district level health workers from leave and training in order to be on stand-by.

For its part, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and humanitarian partners have pre-positioned emergency water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to serve up to 100,000 people. Humanitarian agencies are also currently undertaking social mobilization on hygiene promotion and distributing Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), chlorine and soap, in the areas most affected by the outbreak last year. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has funded drinking water and sanitation activities in 38 VDCs of Jajarkot, Achham and Dailekh benefitting 6,640 households.

The UN and its partners will continue to support the Government in its efforts to prevent waterborne illness. To break this tragic cycle, we call for a dramatic increase in investment in water and sanitation facilities in these high-risk communities.

KATHMANDU, 29 April – As temperatures rise and water sources dry up, reports of waterborne illnesses and even deaths are again on the rise in the mid- and far western regions. Following last year’s outbreak that claimed 369 lives, the United Nations and its partners are watching the situation carefully.

The humanitarian community urges that greater attention be paid to the causes of diarrhoea. Most infections causing diarrhoea are transmitted through contaminated water or lack of adequate hygiene practices. Food rations such as rice, lentils or oil cannot be the source of diarrhoea because food has to be cooked and the cooking process kills any bacteria that might be present. Rather, infection can come through drinking contaminated water or handling food with contaminated hands and water.
Kathmandu, 16 April: The UNESCO Office in Kathmandu organized an informal preparatory meeting of World Heritage Site Managers on 16 April 2010 at the Office. The meeting aimed at discussing the possible establishment of a contact group of UNESCO World Heritage Site Managers in Nepal among the representatives of the site authorities with a view to enhance cooperation among the site managers to effectively implementing the World Heritage Convention.

Axel Plathe, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative to Nepal welcomed the participants and expressed UNESCO’s interest in hosting regular meetings of World Heritage site managers. He briefly pointed out few issues of possible common concern such as regular reporting on the State of Conservation of World Heritage properties, preparation of statements of Outstanding Universal Value, follow up for Integrated Management, pricing policy, involvement of communities, site interpretation, outreach strategies and tourism aspects etc which could be discussed in the regular meeting.

Brief highlights on the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines 2008 for the implementation of the Convention was also presented during the meeting. The meeting was attended by site managers from all four World Heritage sites namely, Lumbini, Kathmandu Valley, Sagarmatha National Park and Chitwan National Park as well as representatives from the Department of Archaeology and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.

The meeting unanimously agreed to establish a "World Heritage site managers Forum" that will provide a platform for discussing various issues of common concern facing in the management and conservation of World Heritage sites. The Kathmandu office will provide the secretariat to the Forum and the first meeting of the forum will be held in May 2010.

UN New Websites’ links

1. Virtual Knowledge Centre to end Violence against Women and Girls: http://www.endvawnow.org/
Consultation Meeting on the Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Education Sector Held


Kathmandu, 30 April: Gender-responsive budgets (GRBs) are an important and widespread strategy for scrutinizing budgets’ contribution to gender equality. GRBs are not separate budgets for women and girls, or for boys and men rather it is a process that aims to mainstream gender into the various stages of the budget cycle. They apply a gender lens (and other categories of analysis including age, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity and location) to the mainstream budget.

There is a need for articulating and implementing clear GRB indicators and guidelines in each ministry, including the Ministry of Education. Hence, a study was undertaken to understand the situation of the GRB of MoE in the education sector and identify the needs for further improvements. The main objective of the study was to obtain feedback and suggestion on the study on the GRB in education sector. Government officials, UN agencies, donors group, representatives from various I/NGOs and education and budget experts shared their views and gave suggestions on the study report.

The study was carried out by a research team of experts on education financing. The main objectives of the study were to make a critical analysis of the education sector policies for their gender responsiveness in relation to their budget allocation at both national and sub-national levels; assess the progress made towards the achievement of gender equity/equality by focusing attention on the budget outputs, outcomes of expenditures; and make recommendations for improvement in making the budget gender responsive in the education sector.

Discontinuation of print copies of UN Treaty Series

As new technologies emerge, the United Nations continues to adjust its publishing practices to improve our readers' experience with – and access to – United Nations publications and documents. We recognize that digital or web-based access is faster, provides value-added functionality, is more efficient, and has the potential to reach more people. It also has the advantage of limiting the carbon footprint of the United Nations publishing activities. More electronic publications will greatly reduce the carbon emissions generated by transporting books by air around the world and will reduce the amount of paper used to publish United Nations books and documents.

In this spirit, effective immediately, print copies of the United Nations Treaty Series (UNTS) will no longer be distributed to United Nations Information Centres as part of the regular or print-plus deposit.

The complete texts of the treaties published in the volumes as well as related subsequent treaty actions are available in electronic format free of charge on the website of the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs at http://treaties.un.org.
United Nations Newsletter in Nepal

UN Habitat supports World Water Day celebration in Nepal

Kathmandu, 30 April: "Clean Water for a Healthy World" is a common theme for the global community participating in the World Water Day (WWD) 2010 throughout the World. The overall goal of the WWD campaign of this year is to raise the profile of water quality at political level so that water quality considerations are made alongside those of water quantity.

The day is celebrated every year on 22nd March to mark the importance of freshwater and advocating for sustainable management of freshwater resources.

In Nepal, Nepal National Water Week Organization Committee (NNWWOC) 2010, led by Secretary of Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS), was formed to organize a week long "Nepal National Water Week 2010" with the slogan ‘Communicating Water Quality; Challenges and Opportunities’. The water week had been designed to commemorate the World Water Day 2010 and World Meteorological Day 2010.

The committee consists of 22 members from different organizations, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, professional societies, academicians, and youth groups.

UN HABITAT also took part in the campaign, and provided its supports in a week long scheduled activities. An interaction programme was organized with this support on 19 April to sensitize the politicians and policy makers on water related issues so that they would address the issues while drafting new constitution and forming other policies and strategies. At the programme, Constitution Assembly members, representatives of political parties and members of Natural Resource Management Committee (NRMC) had been invited to introduce them to the issues related to water quantity and quality in the country.

At the workshop, Honorable Santa Chaudhary, Chairperson of NRMC, CA assured that she would try her best to address water related issues at policy level and requested all the participants to act from individual level.

 Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, UN Habitat and Guthi had jointly organized WATSAN Media Fellowship Award 2009 which declared 10 journalists as the winner in three different categories particularly newspaper journalists, radio journalists and television journalists. The winners of this fellowship were also felicitated by providing certificate and cash award during the closing ceremony of water week.

Various other events were also organized to enhance the effect of National Water Week celebration in Nepal. In the process, information on water related issues were disseminated and public opinions in this regard were collected through social networking sites. Similarly, nationwide open online photography competition, and inter school art and poem competition were also organized. Students were introduced to water related issues by organizing symposium on ‘Communicating Water Quality: Challenges and Opportunities’. Likewise, a training programme was also conducted on Virtual Academy Course on Hydrological Modeling. Street dramas were performed to enhance public knowledge on water quality and its associated issues.
Workshop concludes with Commitment: ‘Will formulate action plan for declaring First ODF Municipality’

Kathmandu, 30 April: Aiming towards total sanitation Itahari Municipality planned to formulate an action plan on declaring Itahari Open Defecation Free (ODF) zone. The municipality, hence, organized a workshop with support of UN HABITAT Water for Asian Cities Programme Nepal, WaterAid Nepal and LUMANTI Support Group for shelter to consult with different stakeholders and come up with a concrete action plan towards this goal.

Around 100 participants representing 40 different WATSAN organizations including I/NGOs, local stakeholders, Tole Lead Organizations, Municipalities from Sunsari District, Community Based Organizations and journalists took part in the workshop.

In order to achieve the desired goal, the workshop had been focused to identify the appropriate WATSAN strategies and potential donor agencies and organizations.

Building new partnerships and to ensure commitment to develop effective mechanism for implementing campaign towards first ODF municipality was also the motive of the workshop.

At the workshop, while speaking about the increasing slum and squatter areas in Itahari Municipality, Ram Prasad Thapalia, District Administrative Officer of Sunsari urged all organizations working in WATSAN sector to work together to achieve the target of declaring Itahari as ODF municipality.

Executive Officer of Itahari Municipality Ganesh Prasad Dahal mentioned about some vital activities performed earlier in Itahari for ODF declaration, and opined that around 2000 toilets required to meet the target.

Sudha Shrestha, Acting Chief Technical Advisor of UN-Habitat WAC Nepal informed the participants about the Urban Environment Improvement Project, Small Town Water & Sanitation Project, and Urban Development Programme- initiated by Government of Nepal in this municipality. She also introduced them to the partnership between the UN Habitat and GoN in the implementation of various other WATSAN projects in these municipalities and small towns and emphasized the need of coordination among all these initiatives.

Urban Programme Manager of Water Aid Nepal Mr. Kabir Rajbhandari shared about the development of Water, Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene Implementation Plan. According to him, the plan had been prepared in coordination of Municipality and other stakeholders.

A day long workshop was concluded with a commitment to design a coordinated plan by the end of Jestha 2067 for ODF declaration. The participant organizations also expressed their commitment to mobilize available resources for the implementation of water, sanitation and hygiene focused activities as per the design planned. This is the first initiation towards ODF campaign at municipal level involving all the stakeholders in one forum.
Nepalgunj, 8 April: Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Soren Pind, and Danish Ambassador to Nepal, Finn Thisted and other senior Danish officials visited Mid-Western Nepal on 8 April 2010. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) facilitated this visit and the Representative of OHCHR-Nepal, Richard Bennett, joined the minister and his delegation.

The delegation met with members of the Conflict Victims Committee (CVC) in Bardiya district, receiving an account of cases of conflict related enforced disappearances and the struggle of victims in their search for justice and truth. The visit continued in Banke district to a Dalit village where representatives of the Dalit community and of the NGO Dalit Welfare Organization provided an overview about the challenges that they face in relation to the practice of untouchability and discriminatory access to basic services.

Minister Pind assured both groups that he would raise their concerns with the government of Nepal during his meetings in Kathmandu and confirmed that Nepal remains a priority for his government.

Accountability for conflict related enforced disappearances in Bardiya and support to marginalised groups in their advocacy against caste-based discrimination in Mid and Far Western Nepal is a major area of work for OHCHR-Nepal.
UN Event for May

**Sun, May 03: World Press Freedom Day**

World Press Freedom Day was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December, 1993, as an outgrowth of the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. This Seminar took place in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1991 and led to the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media (www.misanet.org/charters/windhoek.html). The Windhoek Declaration called for the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press and emphasized the importance of a free press to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development. World Press Freedom Day is celebrated annually on May 3rd, the date on which the Windhoek Declaration was adopted. [http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/press](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/press)

**Fri, 15 May: International Day Of Families**

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, proclaimed that 15 May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families. This annual observance reflects the importance which the international community attaches to families as basic units of society as well as its concern regarding their situation around the world. The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families as well as to promote appropriate action. The Day can become a powerful mobilizing factor on behalf of families in all countries, which avail themselves of this opportunity and demonstrate support of family issues appropriate to each society. [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/IntObs/IDF/IDFframe.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/IntObs/IDF/IDFframe.htm)

**Sun, 17 May: World Information Society Day**

On 27 March 2006, the General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/60/252 proclaiming 17 May as annual World Information Society Day. This Day will help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information communications technologies (ICTs) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. [http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/events/infosociety/index.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/events/infosociety/index.html)

**Thu, 21 May: World Day For Cultural Diversity For Dialogue And Development**

Further to the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by UNESCO on November 2001, the General Assembly, in Resolution 57/249, welcomed the Declaration and the main lines of an Action Plan for its implementation, and proclaimed 21 May the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The Day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to “live together” better. UNESCO continues to promote greater awareness of the crucial relationship between culture and development and the important role of information and communication technologies in this relationship. [http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/cultural_diversity](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/cultural_diversity)

**Fri, 22 May: International Day For Biological Diversity**

The United Nations has proclaimed May 22, the International Day for Biological Diversity, to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Biodiversity is the source of the essential goods and ecological services that constitute the source of life for all. The celebration each year of the International Day for Biological Diversity is an occasion to reflect on our responsibility to safeguard this precious heritage for future generations.

**Sun, 31 May: World No-Tobacco Day**

World No Tobacco Day is observed around the world every year on May 31. The member states of the World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day in 1987. It draws global attention to the tobacco epidemic and to the preventable death and disease it causes. It aims to reduce the 3.5 million yearly deaths from tobacco related health problems.

**Sat, 9 May: World Vesak Day**

The UN General Assembly acknowledging the hope expressed by the International Buddhist Conference, held in Sri Lanka in November 1998, that the Day of Vesak, the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May each year, be internationally recognized and, in particular, at United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations Offices, Considering that international recognition at United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations Offices would constitute acknowledgement of the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made, for over two and a half millennia, and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity, Resolves that, without cost to the United Nations, appropriate arrangements shall be made for international observances of Vesak at United Nations Headquarters and other United Nations Offices.