



# WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL



## WSSCC

International Environment House  
Chemin des Anémones 9  
1219 Châtelaine - Geneva  
Switzerland  
telephone: +41 22 917 8657  
[www.wsscc.org](http://www.wsscc.org)

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WSSCC and SIWI are accepting entries for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the WASH Media Awards

## NEWSLETTER April 2008

### News from the Secretariat

#### The Global Sanitation Fund is launched!

2.6 Billion people or 40% of the world's population do not have access to basic sanitation. In other words - they don't have basic toilets. Their health, dignity, education and even their lives are at risk every day when nature calls, and it calls everyone without exception. The impacts on the environment and economic activities are also enormous.



To date there has been no global financing mechanism solely for hygiene and sanitation. To help fill this gap the WSSCC has launched the **Global Sanitation Fund**. The Fund is not a separate organization. It is one of the key pillars of the WSSCC, and it is therefore hosted in WHO. The main objective of the Fund is to boost sanitation and hygiene expenditures by concentrating on people-centred and demand-driven work programmes, thus contributing to the achievement of the sanitation MDG target. The cost of reaching that target is \$9.5 billion per year. With more than \$50 million already committed by the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK, the Fund aspires to a turnover of up to \$100 million per year.

The International Year of Sanitation is a call to action, to stronger commitments and open discussion to get rid of remaining taboos. WSSCC takes it very seriously. The launch of the Global Sanitation Fund is a significant contribution to the Year and beyond.

#### World Water Day 2008 Central Celebrations in Geneva

The **World Water Day 2008 celebrations in Geneva** on 20 March were dedicated to sanitation. A press conference was followed by **speeches** by Mr. Serguei Ordzhonikidze, Director General of the UN in Geneva, Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands, Chair of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB), Ms. Beate Wilhelm, Assistant-Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Mr. Philip O'Brien, Regional Director of the UNICEF in Geneva and Mr. Jon Lane, Executive Director of WSSCC.

As emphasized by Jon Lane, the celebrations in Geneva were meant to show our support to activities in the field, while many colleagues around the world used the World Water Day to launch the International Year of Sanitation (IYS) in their countries.

Good new material is available to communicate sanitation messages and World Water Day saw the launch of the **IYS advocacy and media kit** prepared by the UN Water Task Force on Sanitation.





## WSSCC Members & Partners *continued*

storage, disposal, treatment, etc. In rural areas, the current success of demand-driven approaches requires a stable supply chain and sufficient service providers, but needs a strong system of quality control, to ensure programmes really reach the poorest of the poor. In general, it became clear that too little is known about the actual cost of sanitation and hygiene programmes, when taking into account hardware, software, and so-called project overheads, such as costs for planning, management and staff.

For more information about the workshop please visit [www.irc.nl/page/39469](http://www.irc.nl/page/39469)

### Zura Mendikulova, WSSCC National Coordinator for Kyrgyzstan, speaks about the International Year of Sanitation

#### 1. What are your working plans for the International Year of Sanitation (IYS)?

Our most important goal is the creation of partnerships. In Kyrgyzstan we have many different national and international organizations working in the fields of sanitation, water and environment and I would like to bring them together to pool their knowledge and enhance the working efficiency of each of them. For the time being they mostly work by themselves and have very little information about each other's projects and I think it's important to coordinate their activities, all the more so because most of them have the same beneficiaries.

#### 2. What kind of organizations are they?

They include the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. UNICEF sponsors activities related to the fight against parasites and works closely with the Department for Sanitation and Epidemiologic Control that has just

organized a vaccination drive. Another department is dealing with women and youth issues. There are also population activities, one of the current projects being the publication of a school manual on "how to lead a healthy life", which would include a chapter on sanitation. Thus we would like to link this with the Department of Education so that each year the World Water Day is celebrated in schools and that children have compulsory classes on sanitation and hygiene practices. There are also projects of the Swiss Red Cross that involve village health committees, and I would like to unite all these efforts linked to water, sanitation, health and women under the banner of the International Year of Sanitation, so



Zura Mendikulova, WSSCC National Coordinator for Kyrgyzstan

#### 3. Do you think the IYS provides a good incentive to sanitation activities on the national level?

Yes, I think it is a very good incentive indeed. However, not enough people, including politicians and decision-makers, are aware of it. But on the other hand it is a very positive moment for soliciting them with these issues. Sometimes I am being asked about information on the International Year of Sanitation and about sanitation activities, best practices and manuals on advocacy work, but very little is available in Russian, not to mention the Kyrgyz language, which is a real problem. If we could have these documents in Russian, we could disseminate them among the village health committees for example, which could have a real impact. But at the national level we unfortunately don't get funding for this.

#### 4. Does it mean that the lack of funds is the most important barrier to a real sanitation leap forward in Kyrgyzstan?

Yes, definitely. For example when we approached the Ministry of Education, they were very willing to work on a policy for hygiene and sanitation education in schools, but they asked us to provide the information and the manuals. And we need funds to find the right people and to organize this. Kyrgyz authorities are not ready yet to include this kind of sanitation projects in the national budget. Plus, the heads of departments change quite often, which complicates the negotiation on these issues. We start working with someone, then this person changes and we have to start all over again.

In fact, most of the development projects in Kyrgyzstan are made possible through grants or loans from external bodies, while very little comes from the national budget. And sanitation issues are for the time being very closely associated with water projects, because it is easier to get funding for water. But much more awareness raising is needed for the sanitation component of water projects because people don't always understand that water can be dangerous. Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country, the water is clear, which doesn't mean that it can't be polluted and dangerous for human beings. People need to be aware of that. This proves that not enough work is done on sanitation issues. It is of course easier to build a new pipe than to change people's habits and mentalities. To achieve that you need to work with very young children, so that they develop the right understanding and the right habits. At the same time you need to educate the mothers. All of this means that you must tackle the sanitation problem from all sides and with all these different actors, from children, to the government and the implementing organizations.

*Zura Mendikulova has been the WSSCC National Coordinator for Kyrgyzstan since 2002. She is an economist and historian by profession and worked in different water and sanitation projects, including those of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. She is chair of the Centre for the advancement of water supply, sanitation and hygiene issues in Kyrgyzstan.*