



Australian High Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government supports learning event in Kandy on safe sanitation for all

More than 70 representatives at a regional event sponsored by the Australian Government in Kandy will explore the question of how to move communities towards achieving the UN target of sanitation for all.

Participants arrived on 8 November from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia to discuss innovations in water and sanitation technology and service delivery. Participants are involved in implementing projects under the Australian Government's *Civil Society WASH Fund*, which is an A\$103 million initiative that is helping to increase poor people's access to water and sanitation services in 19 countries across Asia, as well as Africa and the Pacific.

"Creating sanitation infrastructure and public services that work for everyone is a huge challenge," noted Ms Charlotte Blundell of the Australian High Commission. "The toilets, sewers, and wastewater treatment systems used in many modern cities require vast amounts of land, energy, and water, and they are expensive to build, maintain and operate. We need alternatives that are more sustainable and affordable for everyone," she said.

The Australian Government's *Civil Society WASH Fund* supports 8 major projects in the South Asia region. 13 civil society organisations, most represented in Kandy, are leading the implementation of projects in the region and elsewhere, including World Vision Lanka.

The *Civil Society WASH Fund* will end in 2018 so a new initiative, *Water for Women*, was recently announced by the Australian Prime Minister. *Water for Women* will unlock \$100 million over the next five years of further funding to continue global and regional efforts to improve access to safe water and sanitation for all.

"The major learning from recent gains in sanitation in South Asia has been the priority accorded by local governments to ensuring everyone's right to live in an open defecation free jurisdiction, in preference to their other role of providing latrines to the underserved," said Mark Ellery, Topic Expert at the event.

The Fund's Knowledge and Learning Manager, Ms Bronwyn Powell added that "sanitation is essential to health and dignity, particularly for women and girls and people living with a disability. South Asia has made a big impact on the global WASH sector as the birthplace of Community Led Total Sanitation. This learning event is an opportunity for experts from across South Asia to come together and share their experience and ideas."

BACKGROUND

The Civil Society WASH Fund (www.cswashfund.org) is an A\$103 million investment by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) that is supporting 13 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to implement 29 WASH projects in 19 countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific over four years to 2018. The objective of the Fund is to enhance the health and quality of life of the poor and vulnerable by improving sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene. The CS WASH Fund Management Facility is managed by Palladium International Pty Ltd.

More Information

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