



UN Children's Fund

TOPIC A:

Investment Priorities for Sanitation in Rural Areas

Undersecretary:

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INTRODUCTION

Hygiene and good health care are essential for the growth, development and survival of human beings. Little awareness has been spread in regards to good sanitation and, as an effect, it damages the health of people living in vulnerable conditions. In rural areas where practices like open-defecation are prevalent and washing facilities have continued to deteriorate (or not been enough for all those who need them), the possibility of death increases, alongside disease outbreaks and malnutrition. According to a report of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), an estimated 432,000 deaths were linked to poor sanitation in 2019, representing not only the health issues communities are dealing with, but also the significant economic and social cost that hundreds of people are currently facing.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The Convention on the Rights of the Child assures that every infant should be provided with the highest possible standard of health, highlighting the large demand for sanitation needed in order to fulfill this fundamental human right. (UNICEF, 2014). A joint 2004 United Nations Children's Fund and World Health Organization report estimated that more than 2.6 million people, over 40 percent of the world's population, didn't have basic sanitation, while a worrying amount of one billion people used unsafe sources for drinking water. Children from developing countries are especially vulnerable to these issues; not only is their growth affected, but they're also highly likely to suffer from intestinal infections caused by parasites as a result of poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation in their nations. In turn, these numerous health concerns keep infants out of school, impose a financial cost for their treatment, and contribute to facilitating outbreaks for many other diseases.

The pollution that combines both human excrement and human contact, contributes to the spread of hepatitis, diarrhea, polio, cholera, and many others. In 2010, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released valuable information that reported cholera outbreaks on account of the lack of hygiene in Western and Eastern Africa, South and Latin America, as well as Eastern, Southern, and Northern Asia. Due to the increasingly high rates of infant sickness because of their exposure to human waste, mortality rates have heightened over the last decade.

Without improved health facilities that presumably guarantee safety, people have no other choice but to use inadequate methods. This represents a social problem, especially for women or children under age, because when looking for an outside place to use as a toilet or walking miles to find a *reliable* source of water, they can be defenseless to abuse or sexual assault. Additionally, poor hygiene is also directly linked to financial issues, resulting in the loss in productivity and increased healthcare costs mainly due to widespread sickness. In 2015, Link to Good Living, a Japanese manufacturer, and Oxford Economics, in association with Water Aid organization, estimated an additional cost of US \$222.9 billion because of poor sanitation.

UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTION

The UN General Assembly recognized access to clean water and sanitation as a basic human right in 2010; however, more than half of the nations worldwide do not fulfill this right, which is why the UN Deputy Secretary-General called for action on sanitation in 2013, including the eradication of open defecation by 2025 (WHO, 2019). In times of crisis, which for many is their everyday life, children are vulnerable; UNICEF'S water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) program aims to fix this by working among 100 countries, and has already provided 14 million people with clean water and approximately 11 million with toilets. Still, 94 countries, including some of the most affected, have only received the bare minimum help. Goal 6 from the UN Global Goals on Sustainable Development, objectives to achieve a more sustainable world, focuses on reaching everyone with safe water and sanitation. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, eight targets have been accomplished, and 598 actions have been made towards improving sanitation in rural areas.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The damage that regions without acceptable standards of sanitation cause to the welfare of the environment and the well-being of people.
- The maintenance and behavioral change that would be needed in order to guarantee improved and effective facilities.
- The priority of sanitation as well as adequately financed and innovative ways to reach Goal 6 of the Agenda.
- Both positive and negative effects that result out of past or future political intervention (including from the United Nations themselves).

QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. What is my country's position?
- B. What are my country's policies?
- C. What can my country do to solve this issue?
- D. Which countries can my delegation work with?
- E. What are three possible solutions?
- F. What has been done to solve the problem?

USEFUL LINKS

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