

Date: Wednesday, January 23, 2019

## Introduction

Over the course of an important week for global sanitation, a set of events took place in New Delhi, India:

- The main event where all countries convened in India was the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC); it started on 29<sup>th</sup> of September and closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October.
- Alongside the MGISC, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, the SWA and the Toilet Board Coalition (TBC) co-organised a round-table discussion of sanitation business leaders, “Beyond CSR: Transformation to the Sanitation Economy”.
- Following the MGISC, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, the SWA Chair, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, convened a Consultation of the Ministers of SWA partner countries attending the MGISC.

The timing of the two latter meetings was symbolic of their link to the MGISC. The SWA-TBC Roundtable of business leaders considered the ‘sanitation economy’ starting from the specific illustration of the financial and business aspects of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). The SWA Ministerial Consultation aimed to summarise the key takeaways from the MGISC and define the way forward for countries and for the SWA Partnership.

These three elements of the 'India experience' together constitute a corpus of significant lessons for the SWA Partnership. The present report can be used as a narrative of these events, a list of the takeaways from the events, and an indication of the way forward, both for the SWA and its Partners. It is meant for broad dissemination to all SWA partners. It complements the official report of the MGISC and the summary note of the SWA-TBC Roundtable that are being prepared. Finally, coming full circle, this report on the India experience could actually interest India herself, and strengthen the case for India becoming a partner of the SWA.

## The Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention

The 4-day MGISC <sup>1</sup> was organised by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, India. The Convention aimed to share sanitation success stories and lessons from the participating countries and culminated on October 2nd, 2018, as the flagship Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) entered its final year of implementation. The Convention included a field visit, plenary sessions, and technical sessions.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd, SWA Chair, delivered a talk during the opening plenary on ‘political leadership and sanitation’ <sup>2</sup>. Other plenaries focused on behaviour change, the SDGs, and sanitation financing. Parallel Ministerial dialogues were facilitated by international experts (including one by Catarina de Albuquerque, SWA CEO). The Convention ended on the 2nd of October, with guests

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<sup>1</sup> The full report is being prepared and will be made available on validation by the Indian government and the other organisation partners. [Mgiscindia.org](http://mgiscindia.org)

<sup>2</sup> The text of this speech is available at: <http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/news/swa-at-the-mgisc/>

including the Prime Minister of India, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and several Indian ministers <sup>3</sup>.

The UN Secretary General referred multiple times to the fact that sanitation is a human right, that we must “aim at universal sanitation and nothing else”, that lack of sanitation exacerbates inequalities and has an impact on human rights, that the elimination of inequalities requires courage and leadership and that it is also the smart thing to do economically. He restated that SDG 6 is indispensable to reach all other goals and for gender inequality. Prime Minister Modi referred to the 4 P’s indispensable to reach SDG 6: Political leadership, Public financing, Partnership and People’s participation <sup>4</sup>. The Vice-President of India stated that the Swachh Bharat Mission is vital for India as well as the World.

Of the 400 participants, there were 53 sector Ministers from different countries (including Ministers from 32 SWA Partner countries). Ministers were an integral part of the Convention and contributed to each session, specifically towards giving input, opinion and comments to the thematic sessions on the first day (29<sup>th</sup> of Sep.), observing first-hand the work done in rural India during their visit to the Gandhi Trail (30<sup>th</sup> of Sep.), and engaging in the exclusive Ministerial dialogues (round-table discussions) with other ministers who would present their country’s sanitation story.

During the Ministerial Dialogues, participants exchanged views on building political will for sanitation, ensuring adequate financing and taking steps required to work at scale and reach universal access. They exchanged views on topics including the value of South-South collaboration; sanitation as a driver of peace and economic growth; engaging diverse stakeholders, from parliamentarians to civil society; ensuring clear ministerial or departmental leadership for sanitation; long-term planning; valuing human waste as a resource (fertilizer, biogas); and the importance of public-private partnerships around sanitation.

The MGISC was discussed in detail during the SWA Ministerial Consultation, described below.

Several important resources have been made available on India’s progress towards universal sanitation <sup>5</sup>:

- A short brochure on the impact of the SBM, and the pillars of the SBM’s success: leadership at the highest level, behaviour change, time-bound goals, focus on quality and sustaining gains, monitoring outcomes and not just outputs, and sanitation as everyone’s business.
- A brief on the Sanitation Strategy with the programmatic pillars of SBM – ODF sustainability (reinforcing behaviour change and O&M of infrastructure), and ODF Plus (which includes MHM, link to piped water, greywater management and solid-liquid resource management. The Strategy also includes an Enabling Framework of private sector engagement, sanitation financing, and decentralised governance and institutional strengthening.
- An understanding of the sustainability of ODF status. While ODF is defined as “no visible faeces found in the environment/village; Every household uses safe technology options for the disposal of faeces”, ODF sustainability goes a step further: “safe disposal of human excreta is sustained post the attainment of ODF status”. Key initiatives under SBM for ODF sustainability include

<sup>3</sup> The full agenda of the Convention is available at: <https://www.mgiscindia.org/agenda.php>

<sup>4</sup> Full speech available at: [http://www.pib.nic.in/ViewVideo.aspx?V\\_ID=63105&MinID=1325&VPRID=55665&Day=&Month=10&Year=2018](http://www.pib.nic.in/ViewVideo.aspx?V_ID=63105&MinID=1325&VPRID=55665&Day=&Month=10&Year=2018) and an official press release after the speech is available at: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=183901>

<sup>5</sup> These are available on the MGISC website: <https://www.mgiscindia.org/publications.php>

continued IEC to communities for sustained ODF behaviour, incentives for locally-managed infrastructure and ODF verification (3 months and 9 months after declaration of ODF status).

- The financing of the SBM – including USD 30 billion earmarked from public funds. USD 20 Billion have already been allocated by the Central Government, and an additional USD 5 Billion mobilised by central ministries (this is a direct link to the ‘all-of-government’ approach taken by the SBM). Alternative financing includes USD 100 Million contributed by corporates and USD 350 Million mobilised under credit financing to support construction and repair of toilets. A 2017 UNICEF study concluded that sanitation is a great investment – in India, it is a RoI of 470%.
- A brochure on the link between the SBM and the SDGs. The SBM is helping in the global progress towards SDG 6 – while India had 60% of the world’s open defecation in 2014, its share has reduced to 20% as of 2018 (due to an additional 450 Million people gaining access to sanitation over this period). The impact on other SDGs has also been significant – in terms of prevention of diarrheal deaths reduction in wasting and stunting in children.
- A brochure on behaviour change in sanitation, by placing BCC at the heart of the SBM Strategy – through committed budget allocations, building capacity of community members to instil and sustain behaviour change in the populations, and mid-media and mass-media activities. This led to an increase in demand from communities for safe toilets and their sustainable use, thus complementing the establishment of the sanitation infrastructure.
- A World Bank Group authored report on women’s leadership in SBM-Gramin (the rural component of SBM). The personal journey of the women identified for this study demonstrates the positive outcomes women leaders are playing in advancing the goals of SBM-G. The emergence of women’s leadership is part of a social change process. Significant benefits can materialize when the environment is conducive to such change.
- A brochure on faecal sludge management which has been implemented in large villages and small towns as part of SBM. Recognising the high capital and operations and maintenance (O&M) costs, India has developed a scheme to provide funds to provincial governments to set up and carry out O&M.
- A brochure on Menstrual Hygiene Management, an often-overlooked component of sanitation. It highlights the MHM guidelines released by MoDWS in 2015.

The Main Ministerial Takeaways from the MGISC are:

- Be audacious - It is better to try to achieve a difficult goal in a short time frame than taking a slow approach that does not build momentum or capture attention. Governments should set ambitious targets and challenging timeframes; link achievement of the goal to a meaningful date.
- Show visible political will – the Head of State should endorse and participate, and other key figures in government should show their sustained support.
- Create a ministry, directorate or other body that is solely responsible for sanitation and have it be accountable to the head of state.
- Nonetheless, take an all-of-government approach and get every ministry of government involved.
- Engage all stakeholders in a very visible way: private sector, civil society, celebrities.
- Use the media strategically and make extensive use of all forms of communication channels.
- Create momentum, so that public interest in sanitation evolves into a “people’s movement” rather than an initiative by government
- Evoke the leadership of visionaries – historical figures, religious leaders.
- Engage women in empowering ways, as decision-makers and agents of change, and stress the particular benefits of sanitation for them, especially dignity and safety.

### The SWA-TBC Roundtable for Business Leaders

The SWA-TBC roundtable <sup>6</sup> attracted over 40 participants, representing multinationals (Unilever and others), corporate social actors (Tata Trusts), social entrepreneurs and enterprises, development partners (USAID and the World Bank), and representatives of the TBC and the SWA. The discussions were meant to find a common ground on which to build the ‘water and sanitation economy’, in manners that are beneficial to all stakeholders. Besides facilitating, implementing, documenting and disseminating good business practices in the ‘water and sanitation economy’, the discussions highlighted the need to inform and convince political decision-makers (notably, ministers) on alternate modes of financing for the sector.

This Roundtable highlighted the need to change perceptions of sanitation, from a significant business cost to an untapped business opportunity. Participants from across the board, all linked to the ‘business’ aspects of sanitation, presented their standpoints, with a general consensus that businesses must be motivated to invest in sanitation, thus adding a new meaning to the phrase “sanitation is everyone’s business”.

This first major collaboration between the SWA and the TBC was beneficial to all: the SWA fulfilled its core mandate of being a platform for exchange on the different aspects of the sector, including the crucial element of financing; the sanitation business actors had a platform on which to highlight their expertise and thus extend their reach through the TBC and the SWA. The sanitation economy in India

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<sup>6</sup> A summary note is currently being prepared jointly by the TBC and the SWA’s Private Sector Working Group, and will be made available soon.

took one further step towards a 'unified' or aligned voice from businesses, which can then be used to strengthen the involvement of businesses in WASH programmes like the SBM.

Closing the two-hour discussion, the SWA Chair highlighted the need to document and widely disseminate successful business models in water and sanitation. Such case studies – which could be undertaken by technical expert bodies – would be a useful resource in educating decision-makers (notably, Ministers of WASH and of Finance), on the power of alternate finance. Such documentation could also form the basis for high-level dialogues in meetings like those organised by the SWA.

Several important resources have been made available on the 'water and sanitation economy':

- A white paper and call to action by Aavishkaar-Intellect & Toilet Board Coalition, from September 2018, entitled "Beyond CSR to the Sanitation Economy – Transformational Business and investment opportunities in India" <sup>7</sup>. This paper seeks to take stock of the current state of corporate engagement in sanitation solutions and build the case for businesses to move beyond CSR to un-lock core business opportunities that lie within sanitation systems. The "Sanitation Economy" is defined here as "Business solutions for smart, sustainable and resilient sanitation systems that go beyond corporate social responsibility and contribute to a shift from a system of mounting costs to a system abounding with business opportunity and new markets". The report is timely because "momentum and commitment in India to achieve universal access to sanitation, via the SBM, present a unique opportunity for India to lead and provide a new model for the world".
- A thought piece from the TBC, from Nov. 2017, "The Sanitation Economy in India" <sup>8</sup>, which aims "to develop a baseline understanding of the potential of new markets derived from the Sanitation Economy as well as a quantified estimation of the opportunity, to identify opportunity spaces for business (vs. specific strategies); and to inspire action amongst businesses, regulatory bodies and other actors needed to develop new markets". It views the Sanitation Economy as "a robust marketplace of products and services, renewable resource flows, data and information that could transform future cities, communities, and businesses." The three levels of this economy are: the toilet economy (toilet products and services), the circular sanitation economy (products derived from toilet resources) and the smart sanitation economy (digital technology applications for sanitation); and constitute robust marketplaces of products, services and innovative new markets with a range of opportunities for different sectors.
- These resources complement other existing ones like the Waterpreneurs' March 2018 white paper entitled "Innovative Finance for scaling-up WASH market-based solutions" <sup>9</sup>, a review of the needs and opportunities; and the October 2015 report by the Overseas Development Institute on the "private sector and WASH" <sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Available at [http://www.toiletboard.org/media/41-BEYOND\\_CSR\\_TO\\_THE\\_SANITATION\\_ECONOMY\\_AAVISHKAAR-INTELLECAP-TOILET\\_BOARD\\_COALITION\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.toiletboard.org/media/41-BEYOND_CSR_TO_THE_SANITATION_ECONOMY_AAVISHKAAR-INTELLECAP-TOILET_BOARD_COALITION_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> available at [http://www.toiletboard.org/media/38-The\\_Sanitation\\_Economy\\_in\\_India.pdf](http://www.toiletboard.org/media/38-The_Sanitation_Economy_in_India.pdf), and accompanied by [http://www.toiletboard.org/media/30-Sanitation\\_Economy\\_Final.pdf](http://www.toiletboard.org/media/30-Sanitation_Economy_Final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> available at [https://docs.wixstatic.com/uqd/2c9167\\_b0967ace4d414079a30da4c46e6013da.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/uqd/2c9167_b0967ace4d414079a30da4c46e6013da.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> available at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9930.pdf>

## The SWA Ministerial Consultation

The SWA Ministerial Consultation took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, immediately after the closure of the MGISC. It attracted over 40 participants, including representatives from 17 SWA Partner countries (this included 11 Ministers or Deputy Ministers) <sup>11</sup>. WaterAid's UK Chief Executive was also in attendance.

The Consultation served two objectives. Firstly, it facilitated an à vif discussion on the MGISC – what learnings Ministers would take away from their experience in India. Secondly, it helped identify and prioritise unresolved issues – the issues, among the myriad considered in the MGISC, which are relevant to their countries, what areas they would like more expertise and attention on. This provides some areas in which the SWA can focus on as part of its mandate, initiating and sustaining dialogue and exchange among different stakeholders in the sector, and mobilising will and resources at the highest levels.

The two-hour session was divided into three main parts. Starting off the meeting, the SWA Chair stated his own takeaways from the MGISC, and invited the countries present to do the same. In the second part, representatives of 14 countries intervened to speak of their takeaways and unresolved issues. The final third of the meeting was dedicated to identifying the urgent priorities that need to be addressed, and a broad consensus was obtained on these, showing the SWA the way forward in its country engagement, management of learning across partners, advocacy for the sector, and the epitome of all these, the High-Level Meetings.



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<sup>11</sup> Countries present: Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Zimbabwe.



The SWA Chair started the proceedings with his own takeaways from the MGISC: The ‘all-of-government’ approach, growing to a ‘whole of nation’ approach, making sanitation a people’s movement; the need to set ambitions very high; the need to demonstrate success in a time-bound manner; the need for government leadership, including on financing; and championship of sanitation from the highest level – the head of state.

The SWA CEO added that the experience in India shows that it is indeed possible to achieve SDG 6. She also stressed the need for continuity of thought, dialogue and action, and thus, the need to connect this conversation with the upcoming SWA high-level meetings as part of the SWA’s Mutual Accountability Mechanism and leverage these Meetings to drive and accelerate progress. The introductory remarks ended with the Chair recommending the Toilet Board Coalition’s November 2017 thought piece on the Sanitation Economy in India <sup>12</sup>, terming it “the best publication in simple terms on the Sanitation Economy”.

The Chair then called on the Ministers and other country representatives to express their takeaways and issues. High-level representatives of 14 governments <sup>13</sup> agreed with the SWA Chairs’ takeaways and added aspects that lead to a super-set of learnings and issues, given below. While many countries said that their strongest issue was a lack of financing (more specifically, government allocations), some countries reported on the need to prioritise the centrality of sanitation in government programmes, citizen engagement and rebranding. The crux of the discussions is in line with the Ministerial takeaways from the MGISC.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.toiletboard.org/media/38-The\\_Sanitation\\_Economy\\_in\\_India.pdf](http://www.toiletboard.org/media/38-The_Sanitation_Economy_in_India.pdf); a suitable complement to this is the Nov. 2017 Introduction to the Sanitation Economy, available at [http://www.toiletboard.org/media/30-Sanitation\\_Economy\\_Final.pdf](http://www.toiletboard.org/media/30-Sanitation_Economy_Final.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Togo, Zambia

Taking the floor after the country interventions, the SWA Chair thanked the participants and reminded them of the role the SWA plays in the WASH sector – convening dialogue at the highest levels, and bringing sector expertise.

Starting from these, he summarised the unresolved issues into 10 areas of activity that need to be pursued:

1. Political leadership
2. Guiding Principles (inc. principles of effectiveness, integrity, transparency, inclusiveness and human rights)
3. Legislative, policy, regulatory frameworks Institutional arrangements to ensure success
4. Financing (including innovative financing) and budgeting
5. The Business Case for Investing in WASH, and the Water and Sanitation Economy
6. Technology, Services, Innovation and Capacity
7. Public Awareness, Participation & Multi-stakeholder Engagement
8. Gender, including Menstrual Hygiene Management and Women in WASH
9. Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Accountability
10. Vision and implementation for Sustainability

The Chair reiterated the need to document and discuss successes in the above areas of activity, in such a way that SWA partners can learn from them, adapt them if appropriate, and avoid past pitfalls. This must be pursued through an open, professional, collegial process. This would serve three aims:

- Provide guidance at the operational level on the areas of activity - the actors and actions that have worked.
- Become a tool to obtain buy-in from the highest levels, by showing the things that work and that things can work.
- Constitute sector knowledge, focussing on 'actionable information'.

The SWA can make and facilitate significant progress on this knowledge sharing, as part of its mandate – initiating and sustaining dialogue and exchange among the different stakeholders in the sector, and mobilising will and resources at the highest levels. The SWA is working on collecting successful experiences on these key areas.

The SWA Chair ended the Consultation with a vote of thanks and "Godspeed".

Super-set of learnings and issues raised by countries during the SWA Ministerial Consultation:

1. Sanitation should be a **political priority**. In India, sanitation is placed at the centre of the government's programme. This created a 'ricochet' effect, and 'ownership' tricked down to other levels and actors.
2. The approach should be '**all-of-government**'. India has demonstrated this well.
3. Having a commitment might not be enough, **strong commitment from the very top** is needed. In India, the Prime Minister is the strongest champion of sanitation.
4. Buy-in from, and **appropriation by a host of actors** is essential, including political structures and persons, economic sectors, financing sources and the general populations.
5. Access to **water** supply (drinking water, and water for sanitation services) should not be dissociated from sanitation.
6. Sanitation should be everyone's business, and a **people's movement**. Everyone, from children to leaders, has a role.
7. In terms of financing, India committed public funds, with supplementary support from the World Bank. But India was among the rare successes in mobilising finances at such a scale. Many governments do not commit significant budgets to WASH, and the Bank has not invested in the WASH sector in other countries <sup>1</sup>. Countries do realise that **governments need to lead on providing funding and mobilising finance**.
8. Sanitation is a **separate economic sector**, and must be seen as a huge **economic opportunity**, generating employment and creating value.
9. Other actors, including those from the private sector, should be tapped to generate finances. Budgetary allocations are not enough to close the sanitation gap, and we need **alternate funding**, including innovative financing <sup>1</sup>.
10. The "**branding**" of sanitation must become a central aspect to garner interest, from the population, financing sources and governments alike. This branding must include – economic benefits of sanitation, effect on health, economic opportunity of sanitation, and sanitation as a means to achieve the SDGs.
11. **Effective communication**, including on the 'success story' – regularly celebrating the milestones achieved – is important. This also motivates people to get involved, thus creating a virtuous cycle and making sanitation a people's movement. Important to highlight that "if sanitation is solved, all other SDGs are solved".
12. The management of a large-scale sanitation programme could be done in '**project-mode**' or **mission-mode**, with clear timelines, and efficient institutional arrangements (governance and management).
13. Cost-effective, adapted, locally-developed **technology** must be used; but this requires significant investments.
14. There is a need to develop **statistical tools to evaluate** outcomes, compare to goals, and correct course if needed. Evaluation must also factor in aspects of inclusiveness – sanitation and poverty, for example.
15. **Sustainability must be designed into sanitation programmes and strategies**, including long-term financing (including funding for operation and maintenance of established infrastructure) and sustainable technologies.

Four issues were consistently cited as deserving urgent attention:

- **How to ensure sustainability, including operation and maintenance of infrastructure established, capacity to sustain delivery of services, and long-standing behaviour change.**
- **How to attract adequate financing (including innovative financing); how to strengthen the Business Case for Investing in WASH; and how to build the Water and Sanitation Economy**
- **How to reconcile the obligation to serve the furthest behind first, while ensuring sustainability and strengthening partnerships for sanitation.**
- **How to take an ‘all-of-government’ approach (with buy-in given by the highest political levels), and the extension of this to become an ‘all-of-country’ approach, a people’s movement.**