



# Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council Nepal Chapter



Ref. No.

Date: June 18, 2007

The Finance Minister  
Ministry of Finance  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

&

The Vice Chairperson  
National Planning Commission  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

## **Sub: Request for Increased budget on Sanitation and Drinking Water**

Your Excellency,

We, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) represent coalition of sector professionals and organizations all over the world with secretariat based in Geneva. WSSCC seeks to accelerate the achievement of sustainable sanitation, hygiene and water services to all people, with special attention to the unserved poor, by enhancing collaboration and coordination of all sector stakeholders, nationally and internationally. Working on sanitation, hygiene and drinking water issues globally and nationally, we have come together out of a common concern that the progress being made in the sector needs accelerated growth to adequately address the scale of the sanitation, hygiene and water crisis faced by many of the Nepalese people.

Let us begin with best wishes for a successful conclusion to the preparation of the budget for the new fiscal year 2064-65, for a very productive and meaningful exercise in developing a framework for a New Nepal. As you are aware, the government's programme and budget for the last fiscal year 2063-64 had placed due priority on water and sanitation, and which, to reflect this priority, was increased from Rs 5 billion in 2062-63 to Rs 6 billion in 2063-64. We commend the increased allocation and hope that the forthcoming budget will reflect the priority with a further increase in resource allocation to the sector.

However, we are concerned that the increasing allocation is mainly due to the large amounts allocated to one urban projects, which alone consume more than Rs. 2 billion, and rural and small town water and sanitation is not receiving the same priority and similar increases in budget allocation.

We see investments on sanitation and water as having a very high value to Nepal where many people, especially the poor and marginalized, suffer due to a lack of access to affordable sanitation and water supply services, and lack information and means to improve their hygiene behaviour. The cost to the health sector and to the economy can be reduced significantly by improving health through better sanitation and hygiene. Around 13,000 Nepalese children under five years die each year from sanitation, hygiene and water related diseases. The loss in productive labour due to illness caused by poor sanitation and hygiene and not easily accessible and contaminated water supply is estimated to be over Rs 10 billion per year or as high as 4% of the national GDP (Nepal State of Sanitation Report, 2004). Despite such a large potential benefit, investment on sanitation is only 5% of the water and sanitation sector investment. Moreover, sanitation deserves to be looked at in a holistic perspective, including its impact on promoting school attendance particularly of girls and promoting basic facilities requirement of tourism growth.

WHO estimates that improvements to water and sanitation generate a minimum economic return of Rs 2.5 for every Rs 1 invested. Some countries have shown a return on investment as high as Rs 20. We urge the honorable Finance Minister and Vice Chairperson to consider this value of economic return while preparing the budget.

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Without affordable sanitation and safe water, there can be no sustainable development. The sanitation and water sector is in crisis primarily from a lack of political will to push through changes that benefit the poorest and most vulnerable people. If this crisis is not tackled decisively, it will prevent and undermine progress made in reducing poverty, universal primary education and improving peoples' health.

We believe that the budget allocation can significantly contribute in addressing the sanitation and water crisis facing Nepal. We the undersigned representing civil society from various parts of Nepal strongly urge the Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission to ensure due consideration and priority is given to the sanitation and water sector, by allocating adequate resources to address the current crisis in the sector and in doing so address many other crucial development issues, not least reducing the untimely death of children.

In anticipation for your consideration, we remain

Sincerely yours,

Han Heijnen  
Advisor Environmental Health  
**World Health Organization**

Larry Robertson  
Chief, CWE Section  
**UNICEF**

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Chief Technical Advisor  
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Hon Minister, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works  
Hon. Minister, Ministry of Local Development  
Hon. Minister, Ministry of Health and Population  
Hon.Minister, Ministry of Education & Sports

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