

CONCEPT NOTE ON
Second Coastal Water Convention
July 2019, Khulna



***Strengthening governance, enhancing private sector engagement,
protecting eco-system and adapting to climate change impact***

Water Convention Organizing Committee, Khulna

Background

Approximately **780** million people do not have access to an improved drinking water source. Throughout the world, an estimated 2.4 billion people lack basic sanitation (more than 32% of the world's population).¹ Despite progress, 610 million people in South Asia still practice open defecation (over 60% of the global burden). Over 134 million people still do not have access to improved drinking water. It is currently estimated that in South Asia between 68 to 84 percent of water sources are contaminated. Poor menstrual hygiene management among young girls in school, is one of the causes of school absenteeism and drop-off.²

This absence of clean water and safe sanitation facilities poses a serious threat to Bangladesh's future and to the children. Currently, 36% of children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition or suffering,³ which is partially caused by the lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation. Studies show that appropriate water treatment can reduce stunting by **24%**.⁴ Improved sanitation services can reduce stunting by 9%.⁵ It is estimated that **more than 70 million people** in Bangladesh are affected by climate change, many of whom live in coastal areas. The coastal population faces increasing risks from rising sea levels, saline intrusion and arsenic contamination in the ground water, which led to insecurity of safe and affordable drinking water.⁶

According to baseline data,⁷ 26.7% of people live on less than USD 1.9 per day; 42.2% households have sanitation facilities and 61% households do not maintain soap and water for hand washing. Prevalence of underweight (30.2%), stunted (26.8%) and wasted (17.4%) children under five years of age in the program area is quite alarming. Percentage of women who make decisions alone about the use of self-earned cash is only 16.1%. Only **35.2%** percentage of households are using recommended water treatment technologies. Water points are inaccessible and time-consuming for households in the Southwest of Bangladesh. Baseline data shows that only **34.5%** households can obtain drinking water in less than 30 minutes (round trip).

Water is the basic human right and the single-most important resource for human well-being. It is essential to life and human health, economic development, food security, poverty reduction and sustainable ecological functions.⁸ "Coastal Water Convention" is a joint effort of World Vision Bangladesh, Coastal Water Alliance and others actors for drawing attention of the government as well as policy makers to mitigate water crisis in the Southwest of Bangladesh.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/index.html>

²Challenges, WASH, at <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash>

³See World Bank, Prevalence of stunting, height for age (% of children under 5), available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.STNT.ZS?locations=BD>

⁴Joseph, G. S. Haque, and N. Moqueet, 2017. "Children Need Clean Water to Grow- E. Coli Contamination and Childhood Stunting in Bangladesh". Policy Research Working Paper, World Bank, Washington, DC.

⁵Ibid.

⁶K. D. Tusar and C. Moumita (2013) "Climate change influence water use pattern in south-west coastal belt of Bangladesh" J. Environ. Sci. & Natural Resources, 6(2): 217 -225

⁷Nobo Jatra Baseline Survey Fact Sheet.

⁸UN Water 2013



Why coastal water convention ?

The convention will create opportunities to have dialogue and sharing among stakeholders about access to safe drinking water in coastal areas; this will further harmonize actors and institutions in the area of water governance and financing. Stakeholders will discuss about challenges and the ever increasing demand for drinking water. Greater coordination among stakeholders and joint action plan will add value to national policies and for channeling more finances. The convention will inspire actors and institutions to come up with concrete and operational business cases, good practices, success, challenges and learning.

Objectives of the Convention

- 1 To bring all the stakeholders under a common platform (among public, private and civil society actors) to overcome challenge about access to safe drinking water challenge in the coastal districts of Southwest.
- 2 To strengthen collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, and assist government to implement action plan complying policies.
- 3 Sharing experiences and insights about sustainable financing mechanisms for water infrastructure and identify ways to take actions both at policy and implementation level.
- 4 To develop evidence bases and advocacy tools for policy makers and other relevant actors

Expected Outcome of the Convention

- Ideas, models, technologies and strategies will be interchanged among the stakeholders in water sector, especially recommendations will be applied the in coastal area where it fits appropriately.
- Good practices, success stories, evidence based advocacy, research and publications are encouraged as good source of reference, and knowledge is gathered as well as shared.
- A comprehensive declaration will be made by analyzing the issues raised from different discussions and actions are followed up in order to implement those.
- A common platform is created among public, private and civil society actors, which will play significant role for raising voice in increasing more financing to mitigate water crisis, development, design & implementation of project, and monitoring, evaluation and advocacy etc.



Proposed themes

Technical sessions will be organized with regard to following thematic areas,

- Governance for access to safe drinking water in the coastal area
- Private sector engagement for ensuring safe drinking water to coastal communities
- Appropriate and affordable sanitation technology for vulnerable communities in light of SDG
- Protecting eco-system and adapting to climate impact

Governance for access to safe drinking water in the coastal area

This theme will inquire political, economic and administrative authority with regard to water governance at all levels. “Governance” comprises the complex mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizen and groups articulate their interests, mediate the differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. State creates a conducive political and legal environment and private sector generates jobs and income. Civil society facilitates dialogues and social interaction, and mobilizes groups to claim economic, social and political rights. In addition, lack of coordination among stakeholders is considered as one of the bars to inclusive coastal development. A major requirement for good governance is to promote constructive interaction among these three actors. The convention will create a common platform to discuss, debate and work side by side involving three major actors of good governance to ensure effective water governance in the coastal districts.

Private sector engagement for ensuring safe drinking water to coastal communities

Major actors in the field of water supply are the government agencies (Department of public Health Engineering, DPHE), local government institutions (Union Parishads) and community based organizations (CBOs). CBOs are playing an important role over the years for the operation and maintenance of the water points facilitated by NGOs. Almost all water points are being constructed by private contractors, which are funded by government or NGOs. There are evidences of private investment for ensuring water supply under business mode. DPHE, having financial support from the World Bank, implemented number of piped-water schemes in rural areas, which are operated by private sector and are run under business modalities. Rural Development Academy implemented water schemes, which are mainly operated by Farmers’ Association.

There is absence of private investors for expanding water business. Some vendors are selling water in kiosks, and the price of water is high. Private investors lack interest for water business due to absence of incentives, regulatory framework and investor-friendly guideline. Private investors usually find risk investing in water business. Considering above causes, this theme will focus on business model, learning-sharing, review and update about water business model through private sector engagement.



Appropriate and affordable sanitation technology for vulnerable communities in light of SDG

Bangladesh is pioneer in achieving remarkable progress on sanitation coverage in South Asia. Now the country is trying to achieve zero defecation but rural sanitation coverage has not yet met expectation. Though overall progress seemingly appears good, the country is far away from achieving SDG target. Apart from this, situation of vulnerable communities in the Southwest of Bangladesh is critical, because they do not have climate resilient sanitation technology. As disaster prone and climate vulnerable area, poor households are facing additional burden to rebuild their toilets after every flood or cyclone. Considering such dire circumstances, this theme will draw both public and private actors in WASH sector to take initiative for Research and Development (R&D) of climate resilient sanitation technology.

Protecting eco-system and adapting to climate impact

Climate change has severely affected ecosystem, agricultural practices, potable water crisis, livelihood security, and health status in the southwest of Bangladesh. Soil salinity has exponentially increased after cyclone Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009 in the south west. Sea level rise due to climate change has caused high tides in the coastal areas, which has increased salinity. Incidence of tropical cyclones, heavy precipitation, waterlogging and degree of salinity have exacerbated situation. Shortage of water for drinking and irrigation in the coastal districts have threatened lives and livelihood of the communities. Access to fresh drinking water is further restricted by the calamities caused by climate change. Nonetheless, consumption of contaminated and saline water have increased waterborne diseases and health hazards.



Expected Participants and numbers

Ministers/Secretaries of MOWRM/MOLGRD&C, WARPO representatives, Mayor-KCC, Government Officials, LGI representatives, DPHE, Academicians and Researchers, Representatives of UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, Private sector, Youth, and representatives from Vulnerable Groups, Students, and Media. More than three hundreds participants will attend this convention.



Knowledge Partners

Khulna University, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Department of Disaster Management, Dhaka University, Independent University.



Contributing Partners /Agencies

The national and international agencies working in the coastal belt along with the forums/ networks/ coalition etc.



Media partners

Selected⁹ print, radio and television channels will capture the event and publish/broadcast news reports as well as features.

⁹Selected media in regional (Khulna) and national level (Dhaka)

Other Side Events

Side events will create space for displaying findings and technologies from field besides thematic discussions.

- Stalls displaying water technologies: Stalls will be organized according to themes. Participating organizations, working on the particular theme, would exhibit their activities in stalls. Stalls will be decorated with products and services to showcase relevant water technology applied in water sector.
- Visual Documentary: Organizations will show issue based relevant visual documentaries.
- Street Drama/ Pot songs: One or more street drama/ pot songs would address and exhibit the relevant theme.
- Sessions for Youth/entrepreneur: A session could be organized for youth where youth will share their inspiring words and express views about business ideas.

Proposed Venue

Central Auditorium,
Khulna University,
Khulna.

Proposed date and duration of the event

22 – 23 July 2019

Tentative Session Plan for two days

| Day 1: Time | Theme |
|-------------------|---|
| 10.00 am-10.30 am | Registration |
| 10:30 am-01:00 pm | Inauguration session including visiting stalls |
| 01:00 pm-02:30 pm | Lunch break |
| 02:30 pm-04:30 pm | Three / four technical sessions on selected themes |
| 04:30 pm-04:45 pm | Closing Day 1 |
| Day 2: | |
| 10:00 am-01:00 pm | Concluding session and Khulna declaration Closing day 2 followed by lunch |



Conclusion

Lack of safe drinking water is an alarming public health challenge in the coastal areas. There is need for initiatives to strengthen access to safe drinking water for the coastal communities. This is a call for enabling stakeholders to undertake realistic planning for coastal communities with regard to water sector.



For additional Information

Mohammed Norul Alam Raju
Director - Program Policy and Advocacy
Nobo Jatra Project, World Vision Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02 982 1004 – 11, Mobile: +88 01730037099
Email: Mohammed_Norul_Alam@wvi.org
Skype: Raju.Norul
Web: www.wvi.org/Bangladesh