PROCEEDINGS

BANGLADESH FSM NETWORK

FSM CONVENTION 6

3 MARCH 2024
DHAKA

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The 6th FSM Convention 2024, organised by the Bangladesh FSM Network, featured a selection of esteemed local and regional speakers, including government dignitaries, development experts, and sanitation practitioners. The sessions highlighted advancements made since the preceding 5th Convention, spanning fifteen months, while also celebrating exemplary practices and drawing insights from notable achievements in India and Nepal.

The themes addressed included (i) the integration of city-wide inclusive sanitation planning into municipal programs; (ii) best practices in gender equality and social inclusion; (iii) improving the lives and livelihoods of sanitation workers; and (iv) sanitation financing.

As Bangladesh charts its course towards achieving SDG 6.2, an unwavering commitment to Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) remains imperative. The 6th FSM Convention provided the sector with a platform for collective mobilisation and focused on the potential to bring about transformative and systemic change toward safely managed sanitation in Bangladesh.

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WELCOME SPEECH

Hasin Jahan
Country Director
WaterAid Bangladesh

The 2024 FSM Convention, hosted by the Bangladesh FSM Network, opened with a Welcome Speech by Hasin Jahan, Country Director, WaterAid Bangladesh. Hasin provided a brief overview of the FSM Network since its inception in 2016. She highlighted it's role as a leading knowledge platform and advocacy tool to promote improved FSM services, management and legislation in the country – particularly highlighting the contribution that the Network made to policy developments like the Menstrual Hygiene Management Policy and the Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Faecal Sludge Management.

Hasin also discussed the importance of these regular sectoral wide conventions to ensure collaboration and sharing of ideas and learning between network members, other interested organisations, individuals and government representatives. She articulated that the FSM Network continues to highlight the state of progress and good practices, through both print mdeia and events like this convention, that different municipalities have been making, along with technical advances in desludging equipment and composting processes.

Hasin celebrated the great contribution that is being made by the sanitation workers of this country. These workers who work in pit-emptying or other waste sectors need to have their voices heard. She celebrated that the convention's key note address was being made by a female sanitation worker – wonderful.

Hasin described the experience that each of the founding members of the network have in the FSM sectors. With WaterAid, SNV, Practical Action all having nearly 10 years of field experience in secondary and tertiary cities working with Government for both the technical development of treatment plants, and the mobilising of communities and waste/sanitation workers to operate and manage these schemes while gaining recognition for the important work they do, and accessing livelihood support and increased social dignity. ITN-BUET and other NGOs, have continued to work to grow the capacity and skillset of the sector and Bangladeshi municipalities. With WSUP's SWEEP model, presented an early example of a viable business model for urban sanitation.

She concluded by calling for increased support for sanitation workers, especially through the development of specific labour laws that would ensure their health and safety, and increase their access to health and hospitalisation insurance.

Hasin's closing words encouraged everyone to actively participate in the convention, to learn from the ways that City-wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) planning was being implemented in the model town of Lakshmipur municipality, and to hear about the emerging and established opportunities for sanitation funding through sustainable and green-finance mechanisms.

OVERVIEW OF THE BANGLADESH FSM NETWORK

Uttam Kumar Saha
Strategic Lead - Urban & Energy
Practical Action Bangladesh

Uttam Kumar Saha explained that the Bangladesh FSM Network has been a common and collective platform for sector actors to generate ideas, share views, influence policy, and drive advocacy.

He highlighted the growing influence of female leadership in the network and celebrated the expansion and inclusion of new organisations in the network as formal members. With the plan to expand with another 9 members in the pipeline.

Saha shared that the vision of the network is a safe and sustainable FSM system in Bangladesh and its mission is to be a knowledge development and advocacy platform.

The networks approach is about ensuring the effective implementation of Government policy documents to the achievement of SDG6.2 – while ensuring that no one is left behind.

He celebrated some of the recent achievements of the network – developing standards for the sector, knowledge product development and dissemination, and during COVID the network facilitated sanitation workers' access to COVID vaccinations, highlighting to the Government that sanitation workers were front-line workers.

Saha, highlighted that recently, there had been a shift in the level of organisational capacity and focus for the FSM Network. Originally, from inception in 2016 until about 2020, the network had been mostly event based and ad hoc in its priorities. Since 2020, the network has been working more strategically – developing a clear agenda of change that it seeks to support. The Network currently has 5 highlighted policy agendas, with 2 immediate priorities – namely, advancing sanitation workers' lives and livelihoods, and the integration of CWIS approaches into municipality planning.

Concurrently, the network is increasing its footprint with an increased memberships representing both local and international NGOs, and is supporting increased South Asian collaboration and cross-learning.

Saha discussed Bangladesh's participation in regional events and the progress of the two thematic working groups and empowering the voices and agency of sanitation workers at the Sanitation Month Event.

To conclude, he highlighted that these conventions are not to talk about sanitation workers, but to hear directly from sanitation workers themselves about their challenges and needs. So that the sector continues to ensure that they are in the center of the discussion and the change agenda.

Keynote Speech:

ISSUES & ACTIONS FOR DIGNIFYING THE LIVES OF SANITATION AND WASTE WORKERS

Naseema Begum
Sanitation Workers' Representative

Naseema started by acknowledging the special guests, convention hosts and participants who had travelled from various districts.

Then with great clarity and composure, Naseema shared her story…

I am from Faridpur district and I would like to tell you some of my story…

She explained that the sanitation and waste workers presented/participated at the convention work in various roles—some empty pits, some sweep roads, and others remove waste. However, if they didn't perform these tasks, no one could live safely in their homes or communities.

Naseema explained the traditional manual practice and its risks—when people climbed into septic tanks to empty them, they could be overwhelmed by toxic gases and die. Tragically, these incidents were not the only concern; workers often fell ill from their work, which meant they could not continue working and therefore couldn't earn an income. This situation placed immense suffering on their families, with the dual burden of illness and loss of income.

Even with access to mechanical emptying and some equipment support, "our incomes remain very limited—we work long hours, late at night, and we lack health and safety protections—yet we still get paid very little. Despite all the challenges, we stay in the sector."

Naseema highlighted the gradual changes taking place in the sector, particularly in areas supported by NGOs or influenced by the FSM Network. In these areas, sanitation workers now have the support of the FSM Network and are receiving opportunities for assistance and support. She also expressed gratitude to the municipalities, which are beginning to understand the workers' situations and risks. "So, thank you to the network, to Practical Action, and to the municipality," she said.

She discussed how interventions like the provision of insurance and protective equipment can make a positive difference in their lives, providing more regular income and giving them the ability to have their voices heard.

Despite the progress, Naseema still highlighted the ongoing challenges that sanitation workers face – the need for more formal and secure housing, and an increase in monthly salary to meet their needs.

She was hopeful about the upcoming initiatives to establish a national platform for sanitation workers – "Our cooperatives are now joining together to form a city level network and then 11 districts are now trying to join together to form a national platform…Our hope is that not only these 11 districts but all of Bangladesh will be included in this network for sanitation workers." She highlighted how a national level network could provide greater opportunities for sanitation workers to share their experiences, articulate their needs, and influence decisions.

Naseem Begum finished by offering a special note of thanks to all for the opportunity to share.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Facilitated by
Uttam Kumar Saha
Practical Action in Bangladesh

The open discussion session allowed convention participants to interact and hear from the special guests and speakers through a time of questions, answers and comments from the audience.

There was a comment and discussion about the work that is happening for the development of a national policy for sanitation workers. Dr Mahfuzul Haque Former Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of Bangladesh who is leading the work, highlighted that in his field visits and research he has been impressed by the creative business work that sanitation and waste workers are doing to strengthen and diversify their income. He also discussed about the ongoing work towards sanitation workers' insurance coverage.

Following this, the discussion focussed on the suitability of the protective equipment being provided to sanitation workers, and their needs for a "health card" that could facilitate cheaper or free medical treatment at selected clinics and hospitals.

Sanitation workers from Ghaibandha share their challenges and reflections regarding being a subsistence worker without the ability to save money or access loans. Following this, another sanitation worker highlighted that it would be very beneficial if there were pathways for NGOs or municipalities to support sanitation cooperatives to access bank loans – that this would help sanitation workers to have the capacity to increase their business potential.

Another participant from the Convention Floor asked for more clarity about what capacity development programs are available to sanitation workers and a final question about what municipalities are doing to support their workers.

The panel of chief guests, special guests, munipical representatives and FSM Network leaders all had the opportunity to respond to these discussion points and questions – the Mayor of Shibganj, the co-chair of the CWIS FSM Support Cell provided good overviews of the ways they were working to support and engage with sanitation workers and build the sector capacity.

This was the first year that the FSM Convention had a specific focus on South Asia regional sharing, with speakers invited from both India and Nepal.

INITIATIVES FOR DIGNIFYING THE LIVES OF SANITATION WORKERS IN INDIA

Dhruv Mitter
National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) Alliance

Meghna Malhotra
Urban Management Center India

Dhruv provided an overview of the Indian National Faecal Sludge and Sanitation Management Alliance, describing how since 2016 the Alliance has been advancing policy and advocacy to key change makers, demonstrating innovation and mainstreaming best practices in the FSM sector across India.

The NFSSM Alliance has been informing policy and government initiatives through the "Safe Sanitation Mission" activities towards ensuring safety and dignity of sanitation workers. Dhruv highlighted how the NFSSM Alliance worked with the Urban Management Center to develop a compendium of sanitation workers technologies along the service provision training supports.

Then Dhruv, discussed the example of the Odisha Government, where the government has developed a people-centred sanitation workers policy. Which can be used a guideline for other local or state governments, in India or in Bangladesh, as to how to keep sanitation workers in the center of sanitation policies.

Finally, Dhruv discussed the desire for increased cross-learning within the South Asia region, and the plans to establish and maintain a south-to-south learning hub where best practices, failures, and innovations can be shared between India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Meghna, then took the stage to provide here reflections on implementing these sanitation worker- centered activities in difference contexts within India.

She highlighted that in India they had categorised the 5 broad barriers to improved livelihoods into:

1) Invisibility: Shared the example of the Garima Scheme which identified pit-emptiers, public toilet staff, drain cleaners and workers at FSTP and WTPs. Providing them with formal identification cards, approvals and uniforms to make their work more formal and visible. Now, they are working not only in Odisha but have established a national system – through the IT enabled survey of sanitation and waste workers to establish a national database. Currently 80K+ database of sanitation workers

(2) occupational hazards: Sanitation workers are now attending training sessions at the simulation septic tank that the government has constructed. They also have a simulation vacutag for training purposes. These trainings demonstrate to sanitation worker, and provide safe, hands-on training to ensure they understand the risks and how to empty septic tanks safely.

(3) financial insecurity: The Government of India has identified Sanitation Workers as highly skilled work – and therefore they received an increase in their monthly income – which is paid by the local state that employs them. Additionally, those who work in septic tanks and sewer pipes, are deemed as Highly Skilled and receive an additional 15% risk payment,

(4) weak enablers and enforcement systems: Gave the examples of how septic tanks are designed according to the law – but then are not built in alignment with those rules which means that machines can't access the septic tanks because they were not built according the the law.

(5) Lack of social safety nets: Now regular health camp for sanitation workers are held in Orisha. All sanitation workers there have a health card so that the doctors who assess them can access their medical history online. This leads to better overall healthcare and

A final reflection that Meghna shared was on the ways to increase the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the hot and humid climates of India and Bangladesh where PPE is often uncomfortable and not widely used. She stressed the importance of hearing from the waste and sanitation workers about the suitability of PPE and ensuring that it was the correct fit. But additionally, she described how in some states in India they have now built change rooms for sanitation workers so that they do not need to wear the PPE from home at the start of their work, and they can have a place to get changed out of their PPE and shower before returning home at the end of their shift. She highlighted how steps like this can remove stigma from sanitation workers in their communities.

INITIATIVES FOR DIGNIFYING THE LIVES OF SANITATION WORKERS IN NEPAL

P.T. Lopchan
CWIS Alliance of Nepal representation

Jagam Shrestha
Senior Research Officer – ENPHO

Following the presentations from India, the CWIS Alliance of Nepal, and ENPHO were invited to share their lessons learnt and best practices from the faecal sludge management sector in Nepal.

P.T. Lopchan, presented on behalf of the CWIS Alliance on Nepal. He provided an overview of the Alliance which was first established in 2021, with UN Habitat as the secretariate. The Alliance exists to ensure that urban citizens - everyone and everywhere - have access to safe and sustainable sanitation services. The alliance focuses on – policy support, enabling capacity and learning, documenting results and best practices, and resource pooling to ensure that the sector is as effective and efficient as possible. Plans for the near future include continuing to work in policy support, and monitoritng, strengthing the sectors capacity development and increasing its media presence.

After the overview of the Alliance, Shrestha then shared about the work that ENPHO has been doing in Nepal focussing on enabling sanitation workers' livelihoods, and the challenges they face in Nepal.

Shrestha highlighted how in Nepal it is unknow how many workers are in the sector, and their has been very little work done to understand whether sanitation workers are they able to prevent for themselves their health risks.

He presented the results of a study that ENPHO did between sanitation workers in the Torai (the flat border region in southern Nepal) and in Kathmandu Valley.

They identified 236 desludging vehicles, each with at least 3 workers, and in Kathmandu Valley they identified another approximately 80 desludging vehicles. Then they did a Knowledge, Awareness and Practice assessment of unregistered, informal workers in the Torai and Kathmandu. It was found that very few of the workers (20%) had received any training on health and safety, that there was a range of ethnicities – but the low caste dailts were the majority, and that 80% of the workers had a maximum of primary school education.

A major area where sanitation workers lack awareness is in infection prevention and care of small injuries. Therefore, they are at risk of having a small injury becoming a major infection. Furthermore, those from Dalit communities feel that the work doesn't pose health risks as "their fathers did it and now we have access to desludging vehicles - so we will have no problems.

As a result in Nepal they have developed a contextualised health and safety training programme in partnership with ITN BUET and they have now begun to run training and capacity development sessions.

As a step to reduce manual emptying and to increase the ability to service desludging vehicles more easily locally, the alliance has recently received $40,000USD for the local fabrication of desludging vehicles.

SPEECH BY THE SPECIAL GUESTS

Md Shafiqul Hassan, Project Director and Co-chair, CWIS-FSM Support Cell, DPHE, began by discussing the challenges facing the sanitation and waste management sectors in Bangladesh, emphasising how the DPHE is helping municipalities to overcome these challenges and to enable the nation to meet the SDGs.

Additionally, he highlighted that there is a role for everyone and every organisation to meet the sector's SDG goals – discussing the historical and ongoing contributions from NGOs, municipalities, donors, research institutions and development partners.

There is a role for all organisations to achieve safely managed sanitation!

Then, he discussed the need for ongoing contributions from the Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) to support mainstreaming and scaling, and the ongoing importance of sanitation workers' contributions in reaching these goals.

The DPHE recognises that sanitation workers and their needs must remain in the center of plans – and invites mayors to continue to work with them to progress the achievements before 2030.

Sayd Monirul Islam, Mayor, Municipality of Shibgangj, invited all guests and participants to think about the full sanitation service chain and especially to consider what needs to be done to achieve improved sanitation behaviour change.

He discussed the need to ensure that the entire service chain was considered from the start – highlighting the importance of ensuring that septic tanks need to be in the front of the building – for ease of emptying - but also to ensure that there aren't direct connections into the drain which cause environment pollution. Similarly, he discussed the role of community behaviour change and it's contribution to solving the challenges of household-level waste disposal and waste dumping in Bangladesh.

Using the Muncipality of Shibgangj he highlighted how the municipality is now addressing faecal sludge andsolid waste in a integrated, systemwide approach. "We are now encouraging source separation – for organic and inorganic matter – at the household level…. We have done surveys about the waste generation and the needs for treatment plants to be able to generate organic compost and fertiliser.

He continued and highlighted innovative components of their approach including compost testing and quality assurance, IMIS in partnership with NGOs, and that the municipality is exploring providing improved, free accommodation or sanitation and waste workers.

He highlighted the need to increase the income of sanitation workers and their financial security through insurance – and has said that they will definitely provide insurance for their workers.
He concluded by celebrating the good plans that are in place in the Municipality and committed that they are working towards implementing them and ensuring that they have excellent outcomes for their workers and the city.

Dr Abdhul Kaddir, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Employment, began by acknowledging the sanitation and waste workers who were present and stated that it is imperative that the workers are receiving the rights and opportunities that they are entitled to – and that only when this occurs will they receive the dignity and quality livelihoods that they deserve.

These workers are working within a high risk sector so we must be ensuring that they have the occupational health and safety that they deserve. As a country we participate in the International Occupational Health and Safety Day in 28th April

He suggested that through the national health and safety training institute – which specialises in supporting the workers in risky sectors and providing safety training – that more could be done to support the workers in this sector.

He supports ensuring that all waste and sanitation workers receive insurance coverage. This would align with the national social safety plan, ensuring that suitable injury schemes, maternity benefits, and illness insurance are available.

He spoke about how the government is partnering with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International labour Organisation (ILO) – to promote workers rights and access to broader insurance and workers coverage. This work that has started – they are starting with the formal sectors and then will roll out in the informal sectors.

He also shared that Government of Bangladesh has a specific plan to ensure safe access to housing facilities for sanitation workers in Bangladesh and to develop rules and regulations in future ensuring this supports to continue.

Mohammad Shamim Alam, Joint Secretary, Policy Support Branch, Local Government Division discussed the role of the different stakeholders in driving this agenda forward into implementation. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives.

He discussed the policy support needed for water supply, wastewater, and fecal sludge, and how the Policy Support Branch is contributing to this policy development.

There are four policy documents outlining the institutional and regulatory framework for FSM: Capital Cities, City Corporations, Paurashavas, and rural-level FSM. The Policy Support Branch (PSB) is continuing to review these documents and support municipalities in their implementation.

Part of the PSB's work includes the National Action Plan for FSM and the coordination of international development projects. The PSB aims to provide support for all these activities.

Secondly, he discussed the ongoing challenge of ensuring sustainable financing – without financial sustainability any change achieved will not last. However, the PSB is committed to ensuring the sustainability of the impact. They are committed to keep moving forward – so they are looking to work collaboratively with NGOs and other partners to ensure that Bangladesh does progress towards a middle income country.

We want to work together – all as one - to ensure that there is great progress towards sustainable development. For example in the greater dhaka and Gazipur sanitation and sewerage programme we have inclusive approach working for infrastructure and the wellbeing of sanitation workers.

If it is not inclusive development, then it is not sustainable development.

Nurun Nahar, Deputy Governor, Bangladesh Bank, highlighted that one of the challenges for Bangladesh is the management of all waste. Without effective management, the situation will only worsen, and we need to improve waste management to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We have only six years left to meet the remaining goals, including the safe management of sanitation. Despite our country's high population density, which makes this challenging, we must continue working towards this goal.

We need to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the organisations and sanitation workers making progress in this area. From sweepers to heads of institutions, everyone must remember the importance of these workers—consider what the environment would be like if we woke up each morning without them.

Therefore, the Bangladesh Bank's green finance scheme aims to support environmentally beneficial SMEs and other projects in accessing funding. For example, it provides loans without guarantees.

We envision becoming a developed country by 2024, with a SMART Bangladesh featuring smart communities, smart citizens, and smart cities. This requires awareness and a commitment to protecting our country and maintaining its good state, which is a personal responsibility for all of us.

We are all aware of the impacts of climate change and its consequences. The Bangladesh Bank, through its green financing scheme and partnerships, has various documents and plans guiding our activities, such as the Nationally Determined Contributions of the Bangladesh Government. We are working towards sustainable financing for the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the future, the Bangladesh Bank plans to support only sustainable and environmentally friendly investments. Environmentally polluting activities will not be eligible for BB loans, and activities and products listed on the Green Finance list will receive additional support and opportunities.

On behalf of the Bangladesh Bank and other financial institutions, as we aim to progress from a least-developed country status by 2026, we will continue to develop bank-led and market models to support and guide sustainable businesses and sanitation financing.

SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST

Md. Sarwar Hossain
Chief Engineer, Department of Public Health and Engineering

In 2010 while he was the executive engineer of Mymensigh Municipality – the WATSAN committee made the decision that there should be no direct connections of faecal sludge into the drain.

Gave the example of other FSTPs where there are FSTPs that have been built but due to a lack of demand that are closed or not operational 12 or 18 months later. Therefore it is actually the behaviour change to drive demand for service and to see illegal connections disconnected so that sludge doesn't go into the drains but it always goes to the FSTP.

I know that some mayors are very dedicated to this sector and to making sure that their FSTPs are working and sustainable. And this is really needed. We need the strength of Mayors to make sure the system works. And that there are not illegal connections.

But behaviour change is not only the job of the government – so we need all government and non-government organisations to be aware of the behaviour changes and work towards the behaviour changes that are neded to meet the SDGs in the next 6 goals. It will not be possible only through the DPHE cell or only through NGOs – not we need everyone to work together. If we are going to achieve the goals.

We need mayors around the country who are able to take the lead, and to work together, to achieve these goals.

A special thanks to the FSM network for the invitation to participate.

Parallel Session 1

LAKSHMIPUR MUNICIPALITY A CWIS MODEL TOWN

The main objective of the session was to discuss about the Government of Bangladesh Initiatives achieving the SDG goal 6.1 undertaken by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) through Islamic Development Bank funded 10 Towns LLF project where one of the major target is to "Make Lakshmipur Municipality a CWIS Model Town".

The session was moderated by
Alauddin Ahmed, Project Manager, ITN-BUET.

Alauddin Ahmed, Poura Nirbahi Officer, Lakshmipur Municipality shared a presentation where he described about the CWIS journey of Lakshmipur Municipality and Action plan developed by collaboration of DPHE, CWIS-FSM Support Cell, ITN-BUET and WaterAid. Also the initiatives of Shasthya Nirapotta Scheme (SNS) for Low Income Communities and waste and sanitation workers.

Dilruba Farzana, Deputy Project Director, 10 towns LLF project, DPHE, presented baseline scenario of Lakshmipur Municipality and what interventions will be taken by DPHE. There were some discussions on Challenges and way forwards to make the project a successful one.

In Lakshmipur Municipality, different partners are working and will scale up their best practices with collaboration of CWIS-FSM Support Cell of DPHE. **Md Shafiqul Hassan**, Project Director and Co-chair, CWIS-FSM Support Cell, DPHE presented and shared a presentation about the interventions which will be initiated by different partners. From WaterAid, **Md. Zarif Oeishik**, Programme Officer, shared the interventions taken by WaterAid. From ITN-BUET, **Tazrina Habib Ananya**, Knowledge Management Specialist, shared the CWIS assessment results for Lakshmipur municipality, requirements of capacity building trainings and associated training programmes. **Sonia Shahid**, Senior Consultant, Athena Infonomics, shared how they are planning to use a new tool "EquiServe Tool" for assessing gaps in infra and service, fixing targets and design scenario modelling and preparation of SSP.

Makfie Farah, Bangladesh Resident Program Manager, GWSC, shared how they would work on public data management system for Lakshmipur Municipality. And **Abdullah Al Mamun**, Programme Manager, Practical Action, shared how Practical Action will support Lakshmipur Municipality to establish the sustainable waste management system along with Municipality and Waste and Sanitation workers. Also, Practical Action will work and support the waste and sanitation workers to transform them into formal entrepreneurs and formal service provider group i.e. cooperatives.

During the Panel Discussion Session, in the dais, **S M Shamim Ahmed**, Project Director, 10 Towns LLF Project, DPHE, **Dilruba Farzana**, Deputy Project Director, 10 towns LLF project, DPHE, and **Shajia Sultana**, Project Management Specialist, IsDB, Bangladesh were present. There were some discussion sessions on the CWIS Lakshmipur Model. This session was facilitated by **Makfie Farah**. There were some discussions and questions from the audience on Sanboard data management, engagement of DPHE in more towns following the CWIS model town on Lakshmipur, funding opportunities from other development partners etc.

Parallel Session 2

EXPLORING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SANITATION FINANCING

The session was moderated by
Mohammad Anamul Haque, Financial Controller, BMDF

The target is to ensure that everyone has access to safe sanitation facilities by 2030, eliminating open defecation. However, there are significant challenges in achieving this. Finance is a crucial aspect and assistance from the government centrally is required. Innovative financing is also critical. Chandpur municipality has a great model. Willingness to pay and historically low investment from the private sector are major hurdles.

He described how, thanks to the vision of the PM, the government, with assistance from the World Bank, established the Bangladesh Municiaplity Development Fund. It provides a blended financing mechanism to enable implementation of viable urban development projects throughout municipalities in Bangladesh.

Additional comments were provided by **Zakia Khatun** (Mayor, Panchagarh Pourashava) who spoke of the work in their Municipality to ensure slum communities have access to essential urban services and the need for replication of best practices throughout all 329 municipalities in Bangladesh.

Md. Ali Azam Al Azad (Director, PMF, PPP Authority) highlighted that the current level of available funding is only 10% of what's required to achieve sustainable water, waste and sanitation services. Private sector needs to come in and close this gap. Public-private partnerships can bring in the strengths of the private sector to project financing and project design. He discussed how the PPP Authority is preparing a guideline on small projects financing.

Khondokar Morshed Millat (Faculty Member, BIBM, and Former Director, Sustainable Finance, Bangladesh Bank) - Sustainability is critical to development globally. Bangladesh Bank, since 2009, has been working very passionately on sustainable development. From a handful of channels and products, BB now has numerous categories and products that can be considered green. One such product is designed to finance specifically Sludge Management projects. Banks can get refinancing from BB at 1%, to finance these projects at 5% interest rate. Rather than access to finance, there exists a huge lack of information across the actors working in this space.

Banks need to be sustainable themselves; also, BB has special provisions for (i.e. zero collaterals) for entrepreneurs working on sludge management, among other green solutions. Once again, there lies a information gap among banks as well as those working in the development field.

Finally, **Rafiul Islam** (AFD – French Development Agency) discussed how AFD is designing another project with DPHE for 7 Pourashavas, on slum development, WASH etc. with 100 Million in funding. Solid Waste Management is another priority area and they have more programs in the sanitation sector too.

AFD contributes to financing initiatives on the welfare of sanitation workers. Along with the public sector, these will also be applicable for development organisations, charities, private sector enterprises, etc.

CLOSING SESSION

Professor Tanvir Ahmed, ITN-BUET

Professor Tanvir shared with the convention the important message of ensuring that even as we leave the convention, they we continue to remember at that sanitation workers are still at the center of our programs. Their safety and dignity are the highest priority.

Professor Ahmed challenged the participants that in order to make a significant difference in the lives of sanitation workers, there has to be a significant change made. Examples of policy or practice changes that are possible include – Government led housing improvements, mainstreaming insurance coverage for sanitation workers, and ensure accessible healthcare. If these aspects are met then there will be change seen in the coming years.

Finally, Professor Ahmed reflected that there is still much work to be done to make sanitation projects "bankable" – and that the area of sanitation financing remains a challenge. He advocated for realistic sanitation tariffs, while recognising that as a public good there will need to be government investment as well as tariff contributions.

Member of Parilament
Major General (Retd.) Salahuddin Miaji, MP
Jhenaidha 3

The Honourable Member of Parliament began his talk by reflecting that despite not being an expert, nor experienced in the sector, he recognised that this is a critical issue for the public health, and development of Bangladesh. Therefore, he was concerned and committed to doing his part to ensure progress towards sustainable and safely managed sanitation.

He discussed the need for continuing to increase both awareness within the public and local municipalities and authorities, as well as implementation and documentation.

He highlighted his desire to see waste as a resources that would have beneficial end uses – and to make the system as sustainable and healthy as possible.

He finished by again acknowledging the organisers of the convention and thanking them for the opportunity to participate and share in the day's event.

CLOSING SPEECH

Shawkat A. Begum PhD.
Country Director
Practical Action in Bangladesh

Shawkat A. Begum began her closing speech by acknowledging and thanking all of the special guests and chief guest who had attended and spoken at the convention, along with the organisations who had contributed to the event. She saved special thanks and acknowledgement for the sanitation workers, and the representatives from DASRA, UNC, NFSSMA, CWISAN and ENPHO as international participants.

Shakwat highlighted the ongoing need to keep thinking about climate change impacts, and the resilience of our urban service delivery models – especially FSM service delivery. And how we can ensure that livelihoods, workers' rights and dignity, remain in the centre of all the work – even in the face of increasing climate change impacts.

She celebrated the great levels of participation and collaboration that continues in the sector, gave a special note of thanks to the mayors, representatives of ministries and government departments and leaders of non-governmental organisations that had made the convention possible.

PHOTO GALLARY

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BANGLADESH FSM NETWORK

The Bangladesh FSM Network is a common platform for organisations and practitioners working in Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) in Bangladesh. It's a network for sector actors to generate ideas, share views, influence policy and practice, and raise a collective voice to meet the challenges of the sanitation sector.

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BANGLADESH FSM NETWORK

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