
Human and economic toll of sanitation crisis in Asia-Pacific like an annual natural disaster

Categorize 'Sanitation Intervention' as 'Disaster Management': Scientists and Development Experts

Two critical but overlooked catastrophic effects of the lack of sustainable sanitation services in the Asia-Pacific region are the more than 10 million annual deaths that could be prevented and the adverse economic impact in excess of 100 billion USD. The pervasive issues are: (1) Inadequate emphasis in National System / Policy about the grave sanitation effects on public health and water security; (2) Inattention about pathogen-free disposal from toilet and sanitation systems; and (3) Ineffective stimulants for private sector investments targeting the bottom billion poor as a potential market segment. Therefore, it is suggested that "Sanitation Intervention" be categorized as "Disaster Management".

To this effect, the key messages are: (1) Consider and treat inadequacy of a sanitation and disposal system that is silently killing billions of human beings, and which impacts human beings in the same way that disasters such as earthquakes or floods do; (2) Establish a vehicle for acceleration of investments in innovative technology development in sanitation for pathogen-free disposal and resource recovery; (3) Provide financial, tax and tariff policy instruments to enable access of appropriate and affordable innovative technologies to poor and underserved; and (4) Incorporate the human right to sanitation in national legislation and establish a regional facilitation center/hub for development and dissemination of toilet and sanitation-related technologies to the poor.