The Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC), organised by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, brought together 55 Sanitation Ministers and 200 representatives, from 70 countries. Key issues related to the achievement of sustainable sanitation at scale, success stories and lessons from the participating countries, were discussed. The Convention comprised of plenary and technical sessions, ministerial dialogues, a field visit and an exhibition on sanitation innovations.

The proceedings culminated with the signing of the Delhi Declaration by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, United Nations Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, and delegates, reaffirming their commitment to providing access to safe sanitation for all.

Delhi Declaration

Having noted the importance of the 4 Ps – Political leadership, Public funding, Partnerships and People's participation - in scaling up sustainable sanitation, we, the participants at the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention 2018, will strive to ensure that everyone in the world has access to safe sanitation.

Like India, we too are committed to eradicating open defecation. We rededicate ourselves to the speedy achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

New Delhi, 2nd October 2018
The MGISC was inaugurated by the President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, who welcomed the delegates and stated that India is witnessing an urgency and resolve to reach the unreached and completely eliminate the practice of open defecation. Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, added that the progress and achievement in addressing the challenge of open defecation in India since 2014 is unparalleled. Ms. Uma Bharti, Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, spoke of how “Sanitation matters for poverty reduction and sustainable development...economic growth and combating environmental degradation.” Mr. Yuri Afanasiev, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Mr. D.S. Mishra, Secretary, Housing and Urban Affairs also spoke at the session about the rapid progress India was making under the Prime Minister’s Swachh Bharat initiative.

The inauguration was followed by the first Technical Plenary of the convention - “the Role of Political Leadership in Sanitation”. Mr. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance, Government of India, emphasised the need for sustained financial support and political leadership. Mr. Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia and Chair, Sanitation and Water for All, quoted extensively from the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi who said that a model village would have perfect sanitation.

The Technical Plenary on “Implementing Behaviour Change at Scale”, saw global sanitation experts discuss how a systematic and ambitious, yet pragmatic, approach is required to influence behaviour change at scale. Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, highlighted the main challenges addressed by the SBM: the 4Ss - Scale, Speed, Stigmas and Sustainability in order to make the programme successful.

The Swachh Bharat Concorde Slope

In the last four years, India’s Swachh Bharat Mission has shown tremendous progress, with the rural sanitation coverage having increased from 39%, at the launch of the programme in 2014, to 95% as of October 2018.
achieve a mass movement. Ms. Jennifer Sara, Director of the Global Water Practice, World Bank, underlined that targeted messaging was critical for behaviour change programmes to work. Mr. Roland Ravatomanga, Minister of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Madagascar, spoke of studying and applying social norm theory and social transformation in sanitation programmes in his country. Prof. Valerie Curtis, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, described how passion, emotion, award and incentivization are all pillars for sustained behaviour.

Day 1 concluded with six parallel Technical Sessions. The following are some snapshots from the same.

SESSION I Strategic Partnerships

Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, Chair, Indian Sanitation Coalition, encouraged countries to think of private sector participation “Beyond CSR” and to bring them in as true partners to take the programme forward. Mr. A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal, Minister for Planning, Bangladesh, presented the success of sanitation marketing in Bangladesh with support from NGOs and the private sector, while Mr. R. Venkataraman, Managing Trustee, Tata Trusts, shared the Zila Swachh Bharat Prerak programme that places a young professional in each district in India to ensure that sanitation remains high on the district administration’s agenda.

SESSION II Sustaining ODF Status

When speaking of the importance of sustaining open-defecation free status, Dr. Rudy Prawiradiata, Deputy Minister of Regional Development, Indonesia presented how open defecation has reduced by 15% in the past 10 years in Indonesia, affecting about 29 million people and how they are moving from ODF status to sustainability of behaviours and practices. The panel was joined by Mr. Arun Baroka, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation who presented India’s story.

SESSION III Urban Sanitation and FSM

The session on “Urban sanitation and FSM” highlighted the importance of proper institutional framework, and regulatory environment to empower the sanitation situation in the country. “FSM is central to achieving the vision of an Open Defecation free India. The efforts focus on large and dense villages and census towns across India”, said Mr D.S. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

SESSION IV Gender and Inclusive Sanitation

Ms. Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF India Representative highlighted the impacts of sanitation leading to participation, voice, confidence and income opportunities for women, and increased school attendance of girls. Ms. Aradhana Pattnaik, Principal Secretary for rural sanitation, Jharkhand, spoke about how the state has established a cadre of frontline women motivators and masons, called Rani Mistris, to take lead the movement for water and sanitation in their villages.

SESSION V Sanitation as Everyone’s Business

The session on Sanitation as Everyone’s Business addressed the need for a holistic approach to sanitation with engagement from multiple partners across sectors such as education, health, transport, tourism and the railways, as highlighted by Mr. Ashwani Lohani, Chairman, Railway Board, and Mr. Akshay Rout, Director General (Special Projects). Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Mr. Dinesh Suna and Muftri Rahmanji of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance joined the dais to discuss the role of the faith community as the biggest drivers of change in behavior.

SESSION VI Technology and Innovations in Sanitation

The session on Technology and Innovations showcased five finalists of a rural sanitation technology competition, Swachh-o-vation, organised in the lead up to the MGISC. A public poll jury and audience determined SquatEase, a comfortable squat toilet pan, which makes sanitation accessible to all, including the elderly and disabled, as the winning technology for the competition.
The Ministers from participating countries went on an inspirational ‘Gandhi Trail’ field visit to Gujarat, where they experienced the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, paid homage at his ashram and visited Punsari village, to witness the implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission on the ground. The delegation was led by the Minister of State for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, Mr. Ramesh Jigajinagi.

Delegates visited the local health facility, primary school, and took note of the fact that the village has zero infant and maternal mortality rates. Dr. Isatou Touray, Minister of Health and Social Welfare, The Gambia, noted, “The Convention had already been an inspiration for me... When I get home I am personally going to go to those villages that are yet to be converted. If a country as big as India can do this, then our population of 2 million certainly can.”

Following Punsari Village, the delegation visited Dandi Kutir, a special museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, in Gandhinagar, the capital city of Gujarat. They also visited the iconic Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, an institution set up by Mahatma Gandhi on the banks of the River Sabarmati. It was from his base here that Gandhi led the Dandi march also known as the Salt Satyagraha on 12 March 1930.
Delegates visited a government primary school in Punsari village, where they witnessed how the sanitation programme was being translated from the communities and into the classrooms

**QUOTE UNQUOTE**

“The Indian Prime Minister really took the bull by the horn in terms of sanitation.”

– Bolton Dennis
Assistant Minister for Community Service, Ministry of Public Works, Liberia

“Behaviour Change is not a one-off process, it has to be continuous. [When we experienced] the outbreak of Ebola, they went all out to preach the idea of cleanliness; it is vital to health and economy.”

– Anthony Augustine Sandi
Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone

“Since India is also now talking about ODF plus, I think it is a great way to learn about solid and liquid waste management from them and incorporate the same in our country.”

– Mujeeb Rahman Karimi
Minister of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Afghanistan

“I want to look back into the past and take stock of some of the issues which Gandhi faced, and learn especially about his approach to bringing people together and to driving behavior change.”

– Mr. Gregory Bowen,
Minister for Public Utilities, Grenada

Gandhi’s words memorialized at Dandi Kutir
Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention

Day 3 of the MGISC opened with a panel discussion on “Swachh Bharat Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals”. Ms. Uma Bharti, Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, chaired the plenary, joined on the dais by Mr. Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, India, and Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF.

The session was followed by the Ministerial Dialogues, exclusive parallel round tables where the visiting Ministers 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 importance of global 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 (as fertilizer or biogas); and the importance of forging public-private partnerships to better promote investment in sanitation.

The afternoon Plenary Session on “Sanitation Financing” put the focus on the case for public spending on sanitation. Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, India, said “India has made massive public investment on sanitation to ensure that people realize sustainable sanitation and hygiene benefits”. Mr. Richard Damania, Lead Economist, Water Global Practice, World Bank, lauded India as a successful example of combining public investments and behavior change efforts in sanitation. He cited impactful statistics establishing that public spending in sanitation leads to a heavy return on investment.

A concluding Technical Plenary, presided over by the Vice President of India, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, brought together global development partners as well as national leaders to sum up the technical discussions of the MGISC. As cited by Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, “the MGISC is a strong testament to the collective commitment to achieving the SDGs. I believe this international convention will serve as a platform for collaboration in the future.” The concluding Plenary was further addressed by Ms. Pamela Tshwete, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa, Mr. Hartwig Schafer, Regional Vice President, World Bank, and Ms. Jean Gough, Regional Director, UNICEF.

“We can do more if we all share our experiences.”
– Pamela Tshwete
Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa

“We have learned a lot from India, there is a lot of political commitment we see here.”
– Antoine L. Gbegbeni
Ministre de l’Eau et de l’Hydraulique, Togo

“My visit yesterday to Gujarat has really helped us a lot. My staff is collecting a lot of notes, and they will have a lot of work to do on Myanmar’s behalf...what is most important is at the community level; they should have a sense of ownership and a sense of using the toilet.”
– Myint Htwe
Minister for Health and Sports, Myanmar

“We should see the vision that was started by Gandhi and was brought forward by PM Modi, as well as the citizen participation...first you have to create awareness and when people get the discourse right, and understand the discourse, they will take leadership.”
– Isatou Touray, Minister of Health, The Gambia

Day 3 of the MGISC opened with a panel discussion on “Swachh Bharat Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals”. Ms. Uma Bharti, Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, chaired the plenary, joined on the dais by Mr. Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, India, and Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF.

The session was followed by the Ministerial Dialogues, exclusive parallel round tables where the visiting Ministers 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 importance of global 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 (as fertilizer or biogas); and the importance of forging public-private partnerships to better promote investment in sanitation.

The afternoon Plenary Session on “Sanitation Financing” put the focus on the case for public spending on sanitation. Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, India, said “India has made massive public investment on sanitation to ensure that people realize sustainable sanitation and hygiene benefits”. Mr. Richard Damania, Lead Economist, Water Global Practice, World Bank, lauded India as a successful example of combining public investments and behavior change efforts in sanitation. He cited impactful statistics establishing that public spending in sanitation leads to a heavy return on investment.

A concluding Technical Plenary, presided over by the Vice President of India, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, brought together global development partners as well as national leaders to sum up the technical discussions of the MGISC. As cited by Mr. Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, “the MGISC is a strong testament to the collective commitment to achieving the SDGs. I believe this international convention will serve as a platform for collaboration in the future.” The concluding Plenary was further addressed by Ms. Pamela Tshwete, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa, Mr. Hartwig Schafer, Regional Vice President, World Bank, and Ms. Jean Gough, Regional Director, UNICEF.
The main event of the MGISC was held on 2nd October, and launched the 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi as the SBM entered its fifth and final year of implementation.

The Prime Minister of India was joined by the Secretary General of the United Nations and other Indian national leaders as they closed the four-day international sanitation convention with special addresses, short films and the launch of a set of commemorative postage stamps for the 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.

The final ceremony was held in the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre in the President’s Estate with a digital exhibition showcasing the latest technologies in sanitation, global progress on SDG 6, and various other aspects of the history of sanitation in India and the world. The Prime Minister visited the Digital Exhibition, accompanied by the UN Secretary-General.

A highlight of the ceremony was the films and musical contributions produced in honor of the Father of the Nation, which included a musical montage of over 120 countries’ singers performing Gandhi’s favorite hymn, ‘Vaishnav Jana To’ (YouTube link: https://tinyurl.com/vaishnavjanato). The Swachh Bharat Awards, which recognized youth, volunteers, students, and organisations, which most exemplified dedication towards achieving a ‘Swachh’ nation, were also given out.

“\textit{All people have the right to safe water and sanitation. If we are to build resilient societies on a healthy planet and achieve the overarching ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must tackle this issue urgently, as is being done in India.}"

- António Guterres
United Nations Secretary General
The Prime Minister made his Plenary Address re-emphasising the importance placed by Mahatma Gandhi on sanitation. He said it was Gandhi’s inspiration that led to the Swachh Bharat Mission and that with the inspiration offered by Gandhi’s words and ideals, Indians have made the Swachh Bharat Mission the world’s biggest people’s movement. The country is on track to achieving SDG 6, much ahead of the target deadline of 2030, he added.

The Prime Minister awarded Mata Amritanandmayi Young Swachh Bharat Awardees: Seema, Banica Nongrum and P. Sanjeev

The Prime Minister shared lessons learnt from the Swachh Bharat Mission:

Sanitation cannot succeed solely as a government programme, but needs to become a people’s movement.

Political will and leadership is critical to drive the programme.

To ensure adequate financing for sanitation initiatives.

Engagement with development partners, NGOs, the private sector, civil society and the media.

For all material published or released during the MGISC, including the presentations made during the various sessions, please visit the ‘Documents’ section of mdws.gov.in or mgisc.gov.in

SBM Progress

Rural sanitation coverage: 94.35%
Household toilets built: 86.7 million
ODF Districts: 525

(As of October 2nd, 2018 on www.sbm.gov.in)

An ideal village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation... The very first problem the village workers will solve is its sanitation.

– Mahatma Gandhi

SBM Gramin
sbmgramin.wordpress.com
SBMGramin
@SwachhBharat
Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen

For all media released during the MGISC, please visit the following Swachh Bharat Mission social media handles: