

# AÑO INTERNACIONAL DEL SANEAMIENTO 2008

## Simposio Regional Saneamiento: Determinante Esencial de la Salud

Área de Desarrollo Sostenible y Salud Ambiental (SDE)

Santiago, Chile  
10 y 11 de octubre del 2008



### PRESENTATION SUMMARY

#### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Session No.	I	Title:	Urban Health and the Challenge of Sanitation
Name:	Dr Jacob Kumaresan		
Organization:	WHO Centre for Health Development		
Position:	Director		
Function in the session:	Keynote speaker		

#### 2. SUMMARY

**Introduction.** In 1948, delegates from 53 of WHO's 55 original Member States who came to the first World Health Assembly decided that WHO's top priorities would be malaria, women's and children's health, tuberculosis, venereal disease, nutrition and last but not the least, environmental sanitation. Today, 60 years after, WHO with 193 Member States, continues to recognize the importance of sanitation and shares this value with the entire United Nations and humanity - continuing advocacy for sanitation and continuing to highlight the year 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation.

**"Healthier people in healthier environments."** Where people live affects their health and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. More than half of the global population of 6.6 billion people now lives in urban settings and there is a need to ensure that the urban living environment is a healthy setting. Urbanization as a major factor affecting health, can and should be beneficial for health, but it needs to be addressed systematically for it to support and not threaten human health. The driving forces of urbanization, environmental change, demographic change and technological innovation all converge in the urban setting.

**Social Determinants of Health.** The work of the WHO Centre for Health Development as the hub (2005-2007) of the Knowledge Network on Urban Settings of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health captured and offered synthetic strategic information and evidence on health equity in urban settings, including that of the challenge of sanitation (<http://www.who.or.jp/knusp/knusppublications.html>). A major concern is that at the most extreme end of the health inequity gradient is more than a billion people in low-income and informal settlements ("slums") who are water-sanitation-hygiene challenged.

**Sanitation and a range of inter-sectoral interventions.** Health protection and improvement require that a number of population-level health hazards are considered when managing urban health. Access to potable and sufficient drinking water and appropriate sanitation have become both a traditional and modern challenge. WHO Kobe Centre's experience working on water and sanitation in Bangalore, India (2006 to present), for example, has shown that an inter-sectoral approach with community participation and ownership provides sustainable solutions. Local government and civil society backed by national government can establish participatory governance mechanisms - building and sustaining healthier cities.

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