



### Thematic Area 2: Human Development: *Access to Basic Services*

#### Rationale

There have been remarkable improvements in South Asia in enabling access to water and sanitation services. This has been accompanied with greater investments for improving such services for the majority of the South Asian population. However, despite these positive developments, a significant proportion of the population in South Asia still defecate openly and have limited access to safe water and sanitation services. As a result, child mortality and morbidity remain high for the region. It has been demonstrated that improvements in water and sanitation are associated with better health outcomes.

While there has been a significant decrease in malnutrition in South Asia, the number of children who are stunted or underweight has remained high, with increases even reported in some of the Member States. Improving nutrition is a top development priority in all 8 SAARC nations. Reductions in malnutrition is key for ensuring the sustained economic development not only within each Member States but across the region as a whole.

The prevalence of violence against women and children is high in the South Asian region. This includes domestic violence and marital rape, child marriages, and trafficking of women and girls. In the last decade, considerable progress has been achieved in terms of policy and development of programs and institutions to address violence against women and children in all its forms. However, the numbers of survivors accessing these programs and services provided by the institutions remain low.

#### **OUTCOME STATEMENT: Improve Access to Equitable and Quality Basic Services**

#### **Basic Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services**

All 8 SAARC Member States are parties to the relevant human rights conventions and UN resolutions on the human right to water and sanitation. A few countries have even incorporated these into its Constitutions.

To support the Member States to realize these commitments, SDF will seek to promote and provide funding to projects that accelerate and improve the basic access to water and sanitation facilities in the most vulnerable communities of the SAARC region. It will ensure that vulnerable populations in the targeted rural communities benefit from adequate water and sanitation service development, better management of human waste, enhanced capacity of local authorities in the management and distribute of water and sanitation services. It will also

ensure that continued emphasis is focused on behavior change, demand creation, and on scaling up of successful interventions by both the communities and relevant authorities. Private sector involvement may also be pursued.



## Potential Areas for Collaboration

- Regional approaches that facilitate sharing of knowledge, technology and experience
- Augment national level interventions through regional partnerships and platforms
- Community level interventions to expand access to basic water and sanitation services

support the capacity development of local organizations and media to better address issues related to women and children, and the protection of their rights.



## Nutrition

SDF will support existing initiatives being implemented in South Asia to improve the access to nutrition for the most in need through a multi-sectoral and regional approach. It will support the capacity development of individuals, communities and locally based organizations to expand and scale up its programs to widen its coverage to include the most vulnerable populations. It will also support projects that focus of improving the implementation of regional and national policies and strategies that aim to provide basic and essential nutrition services and support.

## Potential Areas for Collaboration

- Strengthening capacities of regional and national institutions to address violence against women and children
- Community level initiatives that promote the rights of women, children and people living with disabilities

## Potential Areas for Collaboration

- Multisectoral approach to address nutrition (together with the other thematic areas for SW funding)
- Policy and community advocacy on addressing chronic malnutrition at the regional level

## Protection Services

Building on existing initiatives supported by SDF such as the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, and Toll-Free Helplines for Women and Children in SAARC Member States, SDF will work with national machineries and regional initiatives to provide protection and related services to women and children victims of violence. It will also