Improving Health through safe water, sanitation and hygiene: Nepal Experience
Preamble

• Constitution of Nepal 2015 recognizes access to clean water and sanitation as fundamental right of the citizens
• Nepal is committed to meet the targets of SDG Goal 6
• Our National Health Policy calls for multi-sectoral collaboration to improve water and sanitation
• Nepal is rich in fresh water resources from the Himalayas
National Scenario

• Majority of Nepal’s population has access to basic water supply
• Just over half Nepalese people have access to toilets as compared to 1990 when only a quarter of the population had access
• We have made a remarkable reduction in open defecation practice since 1990
• Hand washing has improved over the years with currently almost three quarter of the population with dedicated hand washing space with soap
• Water quality as well as repair and maintenance of water supply schemes are big challenges ahead
Our Efforts

• In 2015, we established a dedicated Ministry for water supply and sanitation
• Since then, the government’s budget for WASH has substantially increased
• We have successfully established community participation as a key driver for improving WASH
• We have promoted Open Defecation Free campaign which is spreading through out the country as a social movement, a community-led initiative promoted by Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs)
Our Efforts

- In recent years, we have put in place much needed policies and strategies to govern and manage WASH
  - National Drinking Water Standards
  - Drinking Water Quality Surveillance Directives
  - Water Safety Plan

- At the policy level, we are trying to mainstream health sensitivity in other sectors
Joint Collaboration among Ministries

• Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011 – MOH is one of the six ministries as signatories
• Multi-sectoral Nutrition Plan 2013-2017 which prioritizes addressing WASH related challenges to effectively tackle malnutrition. Five ministries, including MoH are currently part of this plan
• Our Department of Health Services is working with Department of Water Supply and Sewerage for water quality monitoring and surveillance
Challenges

• Fostering and Strengthening multi-sector collaboration in WASH
• Consistency in maintaining quality of drinking water through out the year
• Cutting through cultural, social, and geographical barriers to promote WASH
  – Untouchability
  – Sparsely located communities in high mountain areas
  – Geographical terrain add to construction challenges
• Rapid urbanisation is an additional burden
• Vulnerability of water supply schemes to natural disasters and adverse effects of climate change
• Maintaining bio-diversity and adequate water-sheds for continued and sustainable access to clean water