

# **CONCEPT PAPER FOR ASEM SEMINAR ON SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WASTEWATER AND SANITATION**

## Background

In July 2013, the United Nations (UN) adopted Singapore's resolution to designate 19 November as World Toilet Day. The resolution – Sanitation for All – was co-sponsored by more than 100 countries. The commemoration of World Toilet Day focuses attention on the global crisis on sanitation and waste-water management. Today, the UN estimates that 2.5 billion people worldwide still lack access to improved sanitation. This underscores the fact that we still have much to do about proper waste-water management. These are issues that have major consequences for health, economic growth, gender equality and the personal dignity of the poorest people in the world.

2 Waste-water management and sanitation are issues that are salient to countries in Europe and Asia. European countries have expertise in municipal waste-water management and have found innovative ways to recycle waste in order to advance their environmental goals. At the same time, Asian countries are striving to improve their practices to align themselves more closely to the Millennium Development Goals. Asia and Europe can work together in concrete ways to raise the standards of waste-water management and sanitation in our countries, and give these global challenges the attention that they deserve.

## Objectives

3 The main purposes of the ASEM Seminar on Waste-water Management are to: (a) share technical expertise and solutions in waste-water management and sanitation; and (b) foster Asia-Europe cooperation.

4 The seminar will provide a platform for an exchange of views and experiences on best practices amongst relevant policymakers and operational experts from governments, international organisations, and industry. This is a first

step towards practical collaboration in the future.

### Format and Discussion Topics

5 There will be presentations and discussions on the following topics:

- **Waste-water Management Technology and Initiatives**

Participants could share and exchange knowledge about the latest waste-water management technology and initiatives currently available, and how they could be harnessed to provide practical solutions to improve sanitation on a wide scale.

- **Good practices on Sanitation**

The plenary could provide the platform to encourage the sharing of best practices on sanitation, including integrated urban sanitation systems that show examples of efficient and affordable services, and also ways in which waste-water resources can be recovered and recycled.

Seeking to bring together policy-makers, think-tanks, International Organisations (IOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the plenaries focusing on the above topics would encourage the relevant stakeholders to brainstorm and come up with practical solutions that could help solve the current sanitation problem.

### Participation

6 Participation is open to all ASEM partners.

7 The Seminar is targeted at the following persons:

- Senior policy-makers or operational experts from the relevant ministries;
- Experts from academia or think-tanks;

- Experts from the sanitation and waste-water management industries;
- Experts from the relevant IOs dealing with sanitation and waste-water management

### Venue and Dates

8 The seminar will be held in Singapore from 26 to 27 June 2015.

### Costs

9 The host will bear the local conference costs. Participating ASEM members are requested to cover the cost of travel and accommodation for their respective delegates.

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