

Poor Sanitation Costs Indonesia Over Rp 58 Trillion Per Year



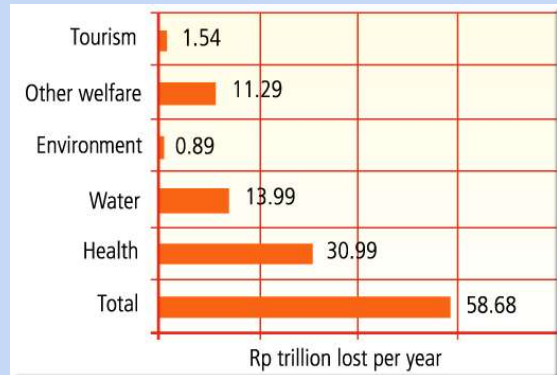
Indonesia loses more than Rp 58 trillion, equivalent to Rp 265,000 per person annually due to poor sanitation, according to "Economic Impacts of Sanitation in Southeast Asia" published in November 2007 by the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program (WSP).

Over 94 million Indonesians do not have sanitary toilets

According to the study, there are over 94 million Indonesians (43% of population) who do not have sanitary toilets and only 2% of urban sewerage connections are treated. As a result of the poor sanitation there are an estimated 121,100 diarrhea episodes resulting in more than 50,000 deaths annually. The annual health impacts from poor sanitation are Rp 139,000 per person or Rp 31 trillion nationally.

Untreated sewage results in over 6 million tons of human feces being released into inland water bodies per year, contributing to massive pollution of an increasingly valuable commodity - clean water. The per-capita water related losses are Rp 63,000 per person or nationally Rp 14 trillion per year.

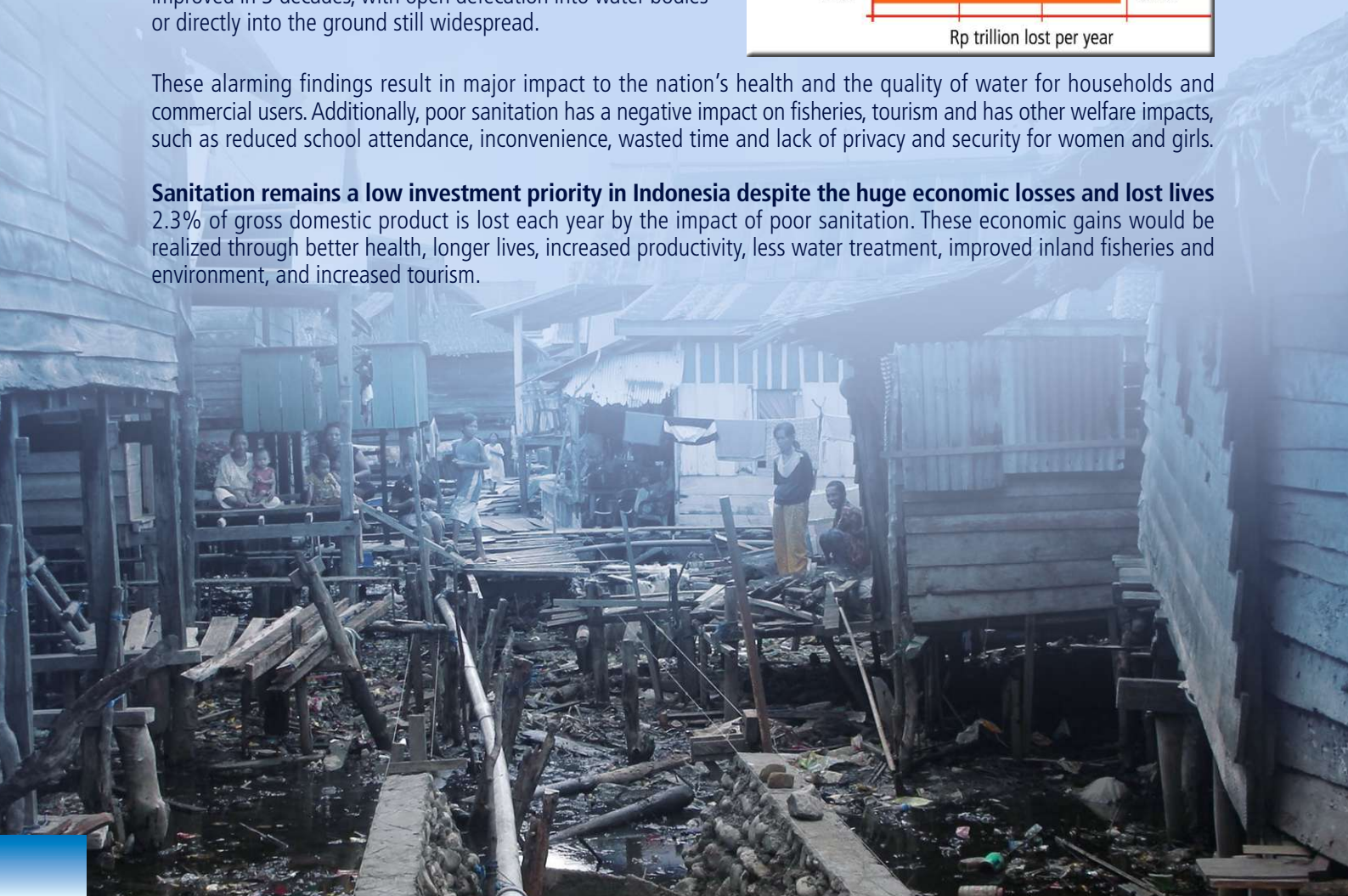
60% of the rural population are without access to adequate sanitation, and are exposed to higher health risks and associated losses of welfare. Sanitation coverage in rural areas has not improved in 3 decades, with open defecation into water bodies or directly into the ground still widespread.



These alarming findings result in major impact to the nation's health and the quality of water for households and commercial users. Additionally, poor sanitation has a negative impact on fisheries, tourism and has other welfare impacts, such as reduced school attendance, inconvenience, wasted time and lack of privacy and security for women and girls.

Sanitation remains a low investment priority in Indonesia despite the huge economic losses and lost lives

2.3% of gross domestic product is lost each year by the impact of poor sanitation. These economic gains would be realized through better health, longer lives, increased productivity, less water treatment, improved inland fisheries and environment, and increased tourism.



What Needs To Be Done

It is clear that poor sanitation leads to trillions of economic losses and unrealized potential revenues. At the same time, poor sanitation claims thousands of lives, especially poor children. Indonesia therefore, needs to make improved sanitation services a high priority. The following are recommendations of the study:-

- **Higher investments in the sanitation sector.**

These huge economic losses and negative impacts make it imperative for the Indonesian government to increase investments in rural and urban sanitation. In larger cities, off-site sewerage systems are needed for central and densely populated areas, with a mix of technical solutions in other areas. Local understanding, planning and ownership for sanitation is essential alongside public campaigns and regulation of the correct construction of septic tanks.

- **Underserved areas are top priority.**

When financing is scarce, investments should be targeted to rural and urban areas that have high levels of poor sanitation. Economic gains from improved health and welfare will be achieved by improving sanitation and hygiene in poor communities, where people are more vulnerable to sanitation-related diseases and other negative welfare impacts. Improvements must be developed with full involvement and participation of the communities, and also include improving sanitation in schools, clinics and public places.

- **Sanitation promotion and hygiene behavior-change campaigns.**

Increased awareness of the effects of poor sanitation and the improvements needed is required by politicians, officials and the community across Indonesia. Less than 30% of Indonesians wash their hands with soap after using the toilet, before eating, and at other critical times. Handwashing with soap can reduce diseases such as diarrhea by up to 35%, which is essential to maximize health gains from water and sanitation infrastructure investments.

- **Increased role of the private sector.**

Private entrepreneurs can do more to develop and sustain improved sanitation services. Their skills in developing, investing and sustaining sanitary systems - not only selling hardware components - need to be developed and integrated into an over-arching drive to bring better sanitation services to people.

Local Government Role and Responsibility

In Indonesia, sanitation has been largely a private household responsibility, and will remain a household and community responsibility in rural areas. However, rapid urbanization with millions living in densely populated cities means it is no longer possible to use only on-site household sanitation in cities. Local government must lead the promotion, planning and development of sanitation on a city-wide and district-wide basis, with support and monitoring of the provinces. In urban areas emphasis on the recurrent financing and tariffs, operations and maintenance of sanitation is essential.



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