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# Beyond the Finish Line: from coverage to sustainable rural sanitation services



Institute for Sustainable Futures



EMORY UNIVERSITY



University of Nevada, Reno

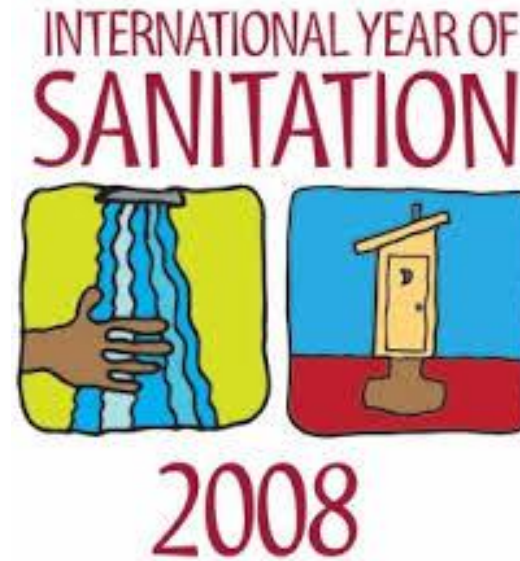


USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# Why “Beyond the finish line”?

- 10 years since the IYS
- Huge drive for attention and coverage. Rightly so.
- Not just (coverage of) safely managed sanitation...



**How will quality of rural sanitation services be ensured by local governments in the long run and what do we put in place today?**

# This morning's session

- Sustainability of rural sanitation in a changing world, Guy Howard
- Patterns of progress and equity in rural sanitation, Josh Garn



Market-based sanitation and a persistent last mile



Strategies in changing rural contexts



Sanitation as a devolved function



Strategies towards safely managed sanitation

- Panel discussion



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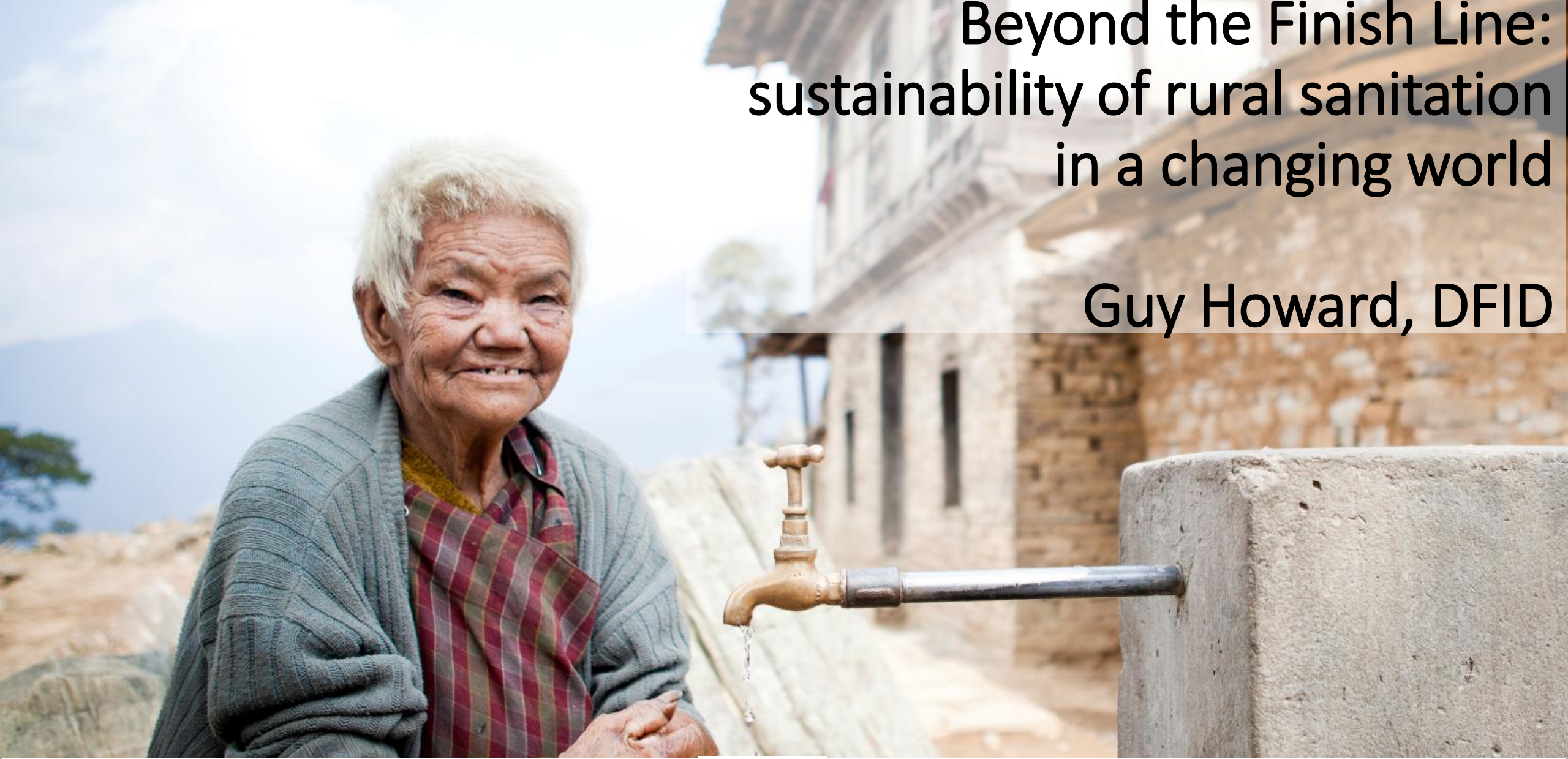
Keep thinking beyond the finish line

**And have a very good session!**



# Beyond the Finish Line: sustainability of rural sanitation in a changing world

Guy Howard, DFID



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## Some history

- Start of the MDGs: focus on promoting improved latrines – ‘the JMP standard’
- Technologies likely to be safer); sustainability often problematic
- Since the mid-2000’s: CLTS as a model, focus on eliminating open defecation
- Equally fairly limited evidence on health benefits and questions whether leads to ‘fixed point’ OD
- Serious questions over sustainability in some (but not all) settings

## **Current view on sustainability**

- Current experience is mixed
- Some evidence of sustained use, but rarely across full communities and populations
- Better traction on ODF than uptake of improved latrines
- Major challenge in moving households up the sanitation ladder
- Particularly in low-density rural areas when private enterprise models uneconomic



## The new SDG agenda

- Very ambitious
  - Universal access to safely managed AND
  - Eliminating open defecation
- Current investments suggest simply ensuring access will not be achieved
- Current investments unlikely to yield sustainable safely managed sanitation
- We will need to unlock new finance and new approaches

## Rural sanitation that is safely managed?

- Latrine that isolates faeces from human contact, including during replacement
- In many cases natural processes (attenuation, predation, die-off) will eliminate risks
- Only assured through risk-based approaches, arbitrary separation distances  $\neq$  safe
- Off-site treatment only if needed (expensive, emits carbon, risk along chain)
- Treatment needs to consider whether process favour transfer of resistant genes

## **Sanitation and hygiene**

- SDGs make stronger link between sanitation hygiene
- Latrines need to have hand washing stations with soap and water
- DFID experience: often difficult to agree with partners what constitutes ‘good’ hand-washing facilities and measuring change
- Opportunities to n join up behaviour change – but challenges remain in avoiding over-load



# FUTURE TRENDS

## **What will ‘sustainability’ mean in the future?**

- Sanitation that continues to be used, is ‘safe’ (isolation of faeces, appropriate final disposal, more evidence of health benefit)
- Sustained absence of open defecation
- Sanitation with handwashing facilities (and evidence of use)
- Sanitation that address emergent problems (notably AMR and climate)

## **Specific concerns about climate**

- Two areas where further work needed (some ongoing)
- Resilience: can technologies and systems manage more intense and multiple threats?
  - At present doubtful
- GHG contributor: primary collection/isolation of faeces, but also transport and treatment considerations

## **Demographics not in rural sanitation's favour**

- Rural populations as a % declining (absolute numbers still increasing) – potential further fiscal challenges
- Urbanisation means those left in rural areas will be most marginalised and vulnerable – more expensive and less able to meet costs
- Aid community & countries increasingly focusing attention on urban areas
- But most people lacking access are rural – need to ensure this is reflected in LNOB

## What does this mean for rural sanitation?

- We know sustainable rural sanitation is hard
- But it can be achieved, partly by mobilising new finance, but also by making sensible choices
  - E.g. safely managed  $\neq$  treatment, it means using natural infrastructure
- SDG's a useful framework BUT sanitation will be important after the SDGs as it was before. Getting it right is more important than speed!