



MESSAGE FROM

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
WORLD WATER DAY**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
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Today, on World Water Day, we should ask ourselves why it is that 1.2 billion people in the world still do not have access to safe drinking water. And why 2.6 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation. This is a simply unacceptable state of affairs.

We know that we all need clean water. But how many of us realize how many lives in developing countries are blighted without it? Families cannot grow crops. Their daughters too often cannot attend school because they are walking long distances to fetch water. And their children – boys and girls – suffer poor health as a result of water-borne diseases. Six thousand people, mostly children, die every day of water-related causes. Providing clean water is the best way to reduce the death rate of children under five.

We need to get the world back on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the percentage of people without access to safe water. This was the purpose of the United Nations General Assembly resolution which proclaimed 2005 to 2015 the International Decade for Action on ‘Water for Life’.

I call upon all those at the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico City this week to do all they can to ensure that the world rises to this most pressing of challenges.