

Smallwatt 11 Conference
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It is truly an honour to join you here in Seville, Spain for the Smallwatt11 Conference on Sanitation, to represent the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. As many of you may know, the Chair of our Board is His Royal Highness the Prince of the Netherlands – a devoted advocate for water and sanitation issues globally. Unfortunately, our Chair was unable to participate, but he sends his most sincere wishes for a successful conference and encourages us to ensure this event develops a set of actionable outcomes and goals to accelerate sanitation progress in South Asia.

Our Board was created by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to galvanize, inspire and coordinate action to speed progress toward the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation. Kofi Annan was also instrumental in the design, negotiations and strategizing that resulted in the MDGs. The MDGs have grabbed the world's attention. These Goals live in newspapers, national policies, town councils, village meetings, and development strategies across the world. We have something very precious in our hands and so in these last years leading up to 2015, we must step up and effectively coordinate all our efforts to reach the MDGs.

I am sure the vast majority of us in this room are convinced that sanitation is central to achieving social and economic benefits and we understand that sanitation is fundamentally linked to the achievement of all the MDGs, particularly the social development goals related health and gender. Think about Goal 4 to reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate. In the year 2010, diarrhoea remains the biggest killer of children under five and these deaths are directly linked to a lack of safe sanitation coupled with a need for adequate clean water. In the case of Goal 2, to ensure that, by 2015, children have the opportunity to complete a full course of primary schooling, again the link to sanitation is evident. Girls, particularly adolescent girls, drop out of school at an alarming rate when they don't have safe, clean private sanitation facilities. And this inequity in education also links sanitation to Goal 3 to promote gender equity and empower women without education, how can women be empowered?

The economic cost of inadequate sanitation is staggering. A recent World Bank study looked at the cost impacts in India for health, tourism, domestic water supply, along with the time lost when people have to search for a place to defecate. According to 2006 data, the economic impact of inadequate sanitation was equivalent to 6.4% of India's Gross Domestic Product – or 53.8 billion U.S. dollars. Figures like these should make finance ministers take notice!

The sanitation community is doing a pretty good job at compiling a convincing evidence base on the many benefits that are derived from extending sanitation services. But we need more. We need more political will on the part of leaders and decision makers to tackle this crisis. Sanitation isn't a popular topic for politicians, dignitaries, or moviestars and so this crisis has not spurred the urgent, well-funded and well planned response that we need to make the kind of progress necessary. To begin overcoming this sanitation stigma, we worked with a coalition to encourage UN Member States to declare 2008 the International Year of Sanitation. The International Year opened a space for frank discussion about why disposing feces safely is critical for development—that sanitation is one of the best ways to really accelerate health, social, and economic development. Communities around the world used the International Year of Sanitation as an advocacy tool to start discussions about this silent crisis. And the International Year helped identify strong champions to raise public awareness and generate concern.

We were all pleased with the positive results of the International Year of Sanitation and I know many of you in this room made huge contributions to the Year's success. But, here we are, just a few years away from 2015, and we are still sadly off track in our efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goal sanitation target. In fact, last year the sanitation target obtained the dubious privilege to become the most off-track MDG target! And so our Board members see the need to build on the success of 2008 by introducing the sustainable sanitation five-year drive to 2015. The drive to 2015 picks up on and continues the spirit of the International Year for Sanitation. We hope the Drive to 2015 will provide a global platform for all stakeholders to demonstrate that time is running out – extending safe sanitation requires urgent action. This advocacy effort will also focus on building political will while trying to put sanitation in the center of the development agenda.

Last December United Nations passed a General Assembly resolution calling on member states to support the global effort to realize the sustainable sanitation; fiveyear drive to 2015. The same resolution called for an end to open defecation and to further strengthen investments in sanitation and hygiene education. Now that we have a powerful political statement of support, we are busy turning this resolution into expanded sanitation coverage for the 2.6 billion still lacking this basic service. The drive to 2015 will be officially launched on June 21 at UN headquarters and the newly formed UN-Water Thematic Priority Area on Water Supply and Basic Sanitation will coordinate its membership around this effort.

I would like to share a personal example of how the drive to 2015 can be an effective advocacy tool. In my home country of the Philippines, a Ministerial Declaration of Commitment to Policy Action on Water and Sanitation was presented to the President on March 22 to mark World Water Day. I was able to push the legislators to include the sustainable sanitation: drive to 2105 in the Declaration thereby putting the urgent need to meet the MDG sanitation target onto the Presidential agenda while also linking the UN resolution to national sanitation policy. I am looking forward to speaking with many of you here about how the drive to 2015 might be used to generate political and legislative support in your countries. In the same vein, our Members are hoping to see the drive to

2015 reflected in the SacoSan ministerial declaration to help make the connection between global, regional and national sanitation efforts.

The drive to 2015 is time bound and aimed at a specific target. We hope it will compliment the efforts of all the groups that are in sanitation field for the long haul. Our Board can help, but sanitation and water will not be delivered by global resolutions or international years or decades. These basic services are provided by people like you. The committed individuals, organizations and governments working with local communities to ensure that every child, woman and man enjoys the health, economic and social benefits which come with a safe and clean sanitation facility.

I would like to thank our Spanish hosts and I congratulate this country for its deep commitment to sanitation provision. I look forward to meeting with many of you over the coming days to learn and to hear your ideas about the drive to 2015.