



SANITATION & WATER ACTION
NETWORK CANADA
RESEAU D'ACTION POUR
L'ASSAINISSEMENT ET L'EAU CANADA

CONTACT: Andrea Helfer
Tel: (613) 230-5182, ext. 229
Email: ahelfer@watercan.com

SWAN Coordination Office
321 Chapel Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 7Z2
<http://www.swanacanda.org/>

NEWS RELEASE

News – National/International
Monday, November 17, 2008

Canadian coalition unveils provocative posters to highlight global sanitation and water crisis: SWAN Canada

OTTAWA, Nov. 17 - To mark this year's upcoming World Toilet Day (Wednesday, November 19, 2008), a coalition of Canadian organizations concerned about the global sanitation and water crisis unveil two new hard-hitting posters to raise Canadians' awareness to the fact that 2.5 billion people presently live without access to basic sanitation, while nearly one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water.

The first poster entitled *Millions of women have to do it with an audience* highlights the shocking reality that many women and girls throughout the developing world are forced to wait until it gets dark to relieve themselves in fields and bushes because they have no alternative. In addition to the indignity and health hazard of this practice, individuals are made vulnerable to the threat of harassment and rape.

The second poster entitled *Dirty water kills* highlights the fact that for the hundreds of millions of people living in the developing world who continue to rely on unsafe sources of drinking water, death will result for many as surely as a prisoner facing a firing squad.

The posters will be used to help launch a new campaign "Join the Call. Toilets for All!". SWAN is looking for public support in demanding that Canada and world leaders honour their commitments to address the water and sanitation crisis.

No toilets mean no separation of human waste from daily life. This lack of toilets forces millions of people to relieve themselves in streets, fields, and water sources; in crowded slums residents resort to the use of "flying toilets" – plastic bags full of human waste that litter neighbourhoods and threaten people's health.

More than 5,000 children die each day from preventable diseases caused by poor sanitation and dirty water - that's the equivalent of 20 airliners crashing without notice day after day.

According to Mr. George Yap, Coordinator for SWAN Canada "...many primary schools in rural Africa have 200 or more students sharing a single filthy toilet, assuming of course the school has such a facility. The lack of sanitation and water facilities discourages students, especially girls, from attending classes and makes both learning by students and teaching by teachers difficult." Adds Mr. Yap, "...investing in sanitation is a cost-effective way to help tackle global poverty."

Currently, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) invests about \$70 million in the water and sanitation sector each year; this represents a mere two per cent of CIDA's total annual expenditures. The members of SWAN call on the Canadian government to make clean water and basic sanitation a foreign aid priority, and to demonstrate international leadership on this vital issue.

The new SWAN posters can also be downloaded at www.swanCanada.org/english/resources.html

-END-

Sanitation & Water Action Network (SWAN) Canada is a coalition of Canadian organizations united in the belief that sanitation and water initiatives must be a foreign aid priority for Canada.

Through SWAN Canada, like-minded groups are able to come together with one voice to engage citizens and government on the critical importance of sanitation and water in the fight against global poverty.

SWAN Canada members:

- [AMREF Canada](#)
- [CARE Canada](#)
- [Canadian Physicians for Aid & Relief](#)
- [Development Workshop](#)
- [Emmanuel International](#)
- [Engineers Without Borders](#)
- [Oxfam Canada](#)
- [Results Canada](#)
- [Ryan's Well Foundation](#)
- [Save the Children Canada](#)
- [SOS Children's Villages Canada](#)
- [UNICEF Canada](#)
- [United Nations Association of Canada /Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies](#)
- [WaterCan](#)
- [Water for People Canada](#)
- [Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group](#)
- [World Vision Canada](#)

Additional Resources:

- United Nations "International Year of Sanitation 2008" - <http://esa.un.org/iys/>
- Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council - <http://www.wsscc.org/>