



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

For Immediate Release
March 20, 2009

Help End Global Poverty: Toilets For All
World Water Day 2009

(Ottawa) March 22 is World Water Day. Clean water and sanitation facilities are the building blocks of social and economic development in every society around the world. Yet 890 million people – about a seventh of the world's population – do not have access to safe drinking water. Some 2.5 billion people also live without access to basic sanitation; 1.2 billion of which have no access to any form of sanitation. This means no toilets, no latrines, and no separation of human waste from daily life.

Sanitation Water Action Network (SWAN) Canada is calling on the Government of Canada to do its part to end the global water and sanitation crisis. As spokesperson George Yap explains, "Canada and other donor countries need to make water and sanitation a foreign aid priority. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) invests approximately \$70 million in water and sanitation. This represents less than two and a half per cent of CIDA's total annual expenditures. There is clearly a mismatch between the sector's importance in the fight against global poverty, and Canada's relative contribution."

In today's economic difficulties, it makes sense to focus on those aid areas that guarantee a good return. According to the United Nations, every \$1 invested in clean water supplies and adequate sanitation facilities yields an economic return of \$9. Clean water promotes the health of girls and boys and increases the attendance of girls in school. Improved water and sanitation facilities benefits girls and women, enabling them to better participate in the local economy. And less people suffering from water and sanitation-related diseases means local medical systems are under less stress.

The Canadian public have expressed a growing expectation that Canada's foreign aid delivers cost-effective and concrete poverty-fighting results. SWAN Canada is calling on the Canadian Government to demonstrate international leadership on this vital issue by contributing its fair share to help achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving, by 2015, the number of people without access to safe water and basic sanitation.

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Sanitation and Water Action Network (SWAN) Canada is a coalition of Canadian non-governmental organizations united in the belief that improving global access to safe, affordable, and sustainable water supply and sanitation services needs to be a Canadian foreign aid priority. www.swancanada.org