



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



November 24, 2008

(Senators and MPs)  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A1



Dear Senators and Members of Parliament,

To mark World Toilet Day (Nov 19), we, the members of the Sanitation and Water Action Network (SWAN) Canada, wish to bring to your urgent attention, one of the world's most lethal, yet solvable, public health emergencies.



Today, nearly **one billion people** – about a sixth 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. This means no toilets, no latrines, and no separation of human waste from daily life.

Without access to basic sanitation, people are forced to relieve themselves in streets, fields, and water sources, or resort to the use of “flying toilets” – plastic bags full of human waste that litter neighborhoods and undermine quality of life for residents.

**Clean water and sanitation are key to fighting global poverty as they:**

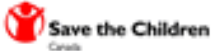
- **Promote Human Health:** More than 5,000 children die each day from preventable diseases caused by poor sanitation and dirty water - that's the equivalent of 20 airliners crashing without notice day after day! At any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from water and sanitation-related diseases. Simply providing adequate sanitation can reduce death rates in vulnerable communities from common water and sanitation-related diseases by 30 per cent, hand-washing by a further 40 per cent.
- **Generate economic growth:** Investments in water and sanitation make good economic sense. Good health fosters productivity and thereby stimulates economic growth. In Africa, every dollar invested in water and sanitation yields an economic return of at least US\$ 9.
- **Contribute to gender equality:** Women and girls especially benefit from improved water and sanitation conditions. Better family health, less time spent collecting water and access to a safe and dignified place to relieve themselves means more time for productive and empowering activities such as attending school, participating in the local economy and tending to crops.
- **Support primary education:** Millions of children in developing countries are missing school because they are sick from water and sanitation-related diseases or are busy fetching water. Improving water and sanitation conditions in schools create a more conducive environment for children to learn and teachers to teach.



**We believe ending the global water and sanitation crisis is possible.**



United Nations Association of Canada



But to achieve this, Canada and other donor countries need to increase foreign aid in this area. Currently, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) invests approximately \$70 million in the water and sanitation sector each year; this represents a mere two 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.

We 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 by contributing its fair share to help achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving, by 2015, the number of people without sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation. The lack of progress made towards the sanitation MDG is especially worrisome; at the current rate of progress, it will be missed by 500 million people.

Both the Canadian public and your party have expressed a growing expectation that Canada's foreign aid delivers cost-effective and concrete poverty-fighting results. We, the members of SWAN Canada, believe that investing in water and sanitation in the developing world is one of the best ways to meet those expectations.

To learn how Canada can help tackle the global sanitation and water crisis visit [www.swanCanada.org](http://www.swanCanada.org)

Sincerely,

Alanna Rondi  
Executive Director  
AMREF Canada

Kevin McCort  
President  
CARE Canada

Anna Miller  
Director of Programs  
Canadian Physicians for  
Aid & Relief

Glenn L. Paje  
Executive Director  
Development Workshop

Reg Keddy  
Board Chair  
Emmanuel International

Parker Mitchell  
Co-CEO  
Engineers Without Borders

Robert Fox  
Executive Director  
Oxfam Canada

Blaise Salmon  
President  
Results Canada

Patricia Markovich  
Executive Director  
Ryan's Well Foundation

David Morley  
President and CEO  
Save the Children Canada

Boyd McBride  
National Director  
SOS Children's Villages Canada

Kate White  
Executive Director  
United Nations Association of Canada

Nigel Fisher  
President and CEO  
UNICEF Canada

Gary H. J. Pluim  
Executive Director  
WaterCan

Tony Petrucci  
President  
Water for People Canada

Cc: The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Hon. Beverly J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation