

Campaign ideas

UN High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals



Here are some ideas of public campaign activities you could undertake in the run up to the UN High-Level Event on the MDGs to raise the profile of the cause and get your message across to policy makers and the public.

You may have much better ideas, or ideas better suited to your context and capacity, so please feel free to run entirely different activities. If you cannot do any of these things it is still worthwhile to meet your government representatives and write to your Head of State also. A sample letter and briefing notes are in the campaign toolkit at www.endwaterpoverty.org/un. Good luck!

1. Take part in 'poverty hearings' being organised in your country

Civil society coalitions in a number of countries are organising 'poverty hearings' that will hear testimonies of people's experience of poverty and report the findings to national parliaments and to the UN meeting. Hearings will certainly take place in Cameroon, Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. They *may* also take place in Nepal, DRC, Zambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Mozambique. If you are in one of the countries mentioned above and want your voice heard in these hearings, contact stevecockburn@endwaterpoverty.org and we will put you in touch with the person running the hearings in your country.

2. Arrange a meeting and photo opportunity with your head of state or government representative

Organising a photo opportunity and/or arranging a delegation to take the End Water Poverty message to your Head of State can be a great way of getting your message to governments and generating media coverage. Some ideas to do this include:

- **Producing a giant version of the End Water Poverty petition**, locate it in a public square and invite member of the public to sign it. Last year End Water Poverty campaigners in Mali produced a giant version of a petition and even managed to persuade the President to sign it.
- **Going Potty** – campaigners in the Netherlands will be delivering 500 potties to their parliament just before the UN meeting, with each potty representing 10 children who die each day from diarrhoea. Why not do the same outside your national parliament with water bottles, toilet rolls or anything else that gets the water and sanitation message across.
- **Message in a bottle** – put your campaign message in a giant bottle and deliver it to your head of state, perhaps accompanied by a delegation.
- **Walk for Water** – why not arrange for a group to carry buckets or containers of clean water and deliver them to your head of state. You could start your walk at a prominent landmark and walk to the meeting.
- **Any ideas?** – If you come up with your own ideas for photo opportunities or stunts please share them with us. E-mail stevecockburn@endwaterpoverty.org.

3. Take a delegation to meet your head of state or government representative

If it isn't possible to organise a photo opportunity or a stunt, **organising a delegation** is another great way of getting your message across. The media are often interested in reporting on events that involve prominent individuals. Your delegation could include:

- Representatives for members of the End Water Poverty coalition – perhaps directors of your organisation.
- Politicians interested in the issue – if you have good links with national politicians who are supportive of the End Water Poverty message ask them to arrange a meeting with your head of state.
- Representatives from communities affected by lack of access to clean water or basic sanitation.
- Religious Leaders – why not look to invite faith leaders to take part
- Local celebrities – why not look to get local musicians, television personalities or sports stars (perhaps someone who has just won a medal at the Olympics!).

4. Deliver a petition

End Water Poverty is continuing to gather petitions following the presentation of 940,000 actions to the Japanese Government before the G8. We hope to present the latest figure to leaders just before the UN meeting, and aim to top 1 million actions.

Why not run a petition directed to your head of state, and deliver it to them in a delegation. Make sure you send details of the petition and how many you collected to stevecockburn@endwaterpoverty.org so that we can add it to the global total.

5. Get the media involved

Your photo opportunity or delegation visit will have more impact if you are able to get the media interested. Below are some tips for getting your event covered by the media. Many of you may already have media plans in place, *and it may work very differently in your country*, but here are some basic ideas:

1. Get a list of relevant media contacts (local, state or province, national – newspaper, journals, television, radio). Find out who is the best journalist to receive your press releases, and, if they want photos, what format they prefer.
2. Name someone for the media to contact, preferably someone who has a mobile phone and is willing to be reached at all hours.
3. Send a first news release to the media alerting them to the upcoming photo opportunity several weeks in advance.
4. Follow up with key journalists or programs to make sure they have seen the release and to suggest events or angles that would particularly interest them.
5. Name spokespeople who are articulate, knowledgeable, and comfortable in a media interview.
6. Arrange for a photographer to cover the events (especially in case a news photographer cannot come).
7. Send photos and news stories to the media immediately after the event.

There is a sample press release and media factsheet in the campaign toolkit at www.endwaterpoverty.org/un, but please do make your own as appropriate to your situation.

6. Let us know what you do!

Please send a report and any pictures to stevecockburn@endwaterpoverty.org so that we can publicise your activities on the website.