

New Report: Bottom billions miss out on life-saving aid Campaigners urge bold action as Ministers gather at historic meeting to tackle global water and sanitation crisis

EMBARGOED UNTIL 330pm EST, 21st April 2010

International civil society campaign **End Water Poverty** today warned that weak targeting of aid is undermining efforts to tackle poverty and ill-health, leaving the poorest of the poor trapped in poverty. The warning follows today's release of a key UN report just two days before an historic meeting to tackle the global water and sanitation crisis.

The UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS), produced by the WHO and UNICEF, shows that only 42% of aid given to water and sanitation actually goes where it is most needed - to low income countries. Further, only 16% goes to 'basic services' - interventions serving the poorest people – down 11% from five years ago.

Analysis of aid figures show some startling results:

- Over 2006-2008 Jordan received an average of \$500 in aid for every person without access to water, while Chad received only \$3.
- Over 2006-2008 Georgia received an average of \$250 in aid for every person without access to sanitation, while Nepal received only \$1

The Report also showed that despite diarrhea being the second biggest killer of children under five, funding for water and sanitation – which could prevent 88% of these deaths - has declined as a share of overall aid (6.3% to 4.7%).

Yakub Hossain, Convener of Freshwater Action Network Bangladesh said *“This Report makes it clear that the way governments have been spending their money is not always reaching those who need it most. It provides indisputable evidence that we need to do more, and do it smarter, to bring life-saving sanitation and water to the 2.6 billion people who currently struggle without it.”*

The Report was launched two days before the first ever 'High-Level Meeting on Sanitation and Water' in which ministers and key-policy makers from over 30 countries will meet in Washington DC to develop plans to reverse these trends and step up progress in this area. It is part of an international '*Sanitation and Water for All*' initiative to be launched this Friday.

Edward Kairu, Chairman of the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW) added: *“We are left in no doubt that we can make great strides in tackling poverty and ill-health if we can get more funding for water and sanitation to reach the poorest communities. We welcome the fact that Ministers meet this Friday to discuss measures needed to do this - if they are bold we can begin to end a crisis that kills more children than HIV/AIDS, malaria and measles combined”*

End Water Poverty is calling for countries to work towards providing at least 70% of their aid to low-income countries, and investing additional resources in the poorest countries, WHO estimates that 2.2 million child deaths per year could be prevented by the reduction of diarrhoeal and malnutrition related to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene; and in a separate study that every \$1 investment in water and sanitation results in a \$8 economic return.

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Notes to editors:

- The 'High-Level Meeting on Sanitation and Water' is being hosted by UNICEF, and is part of a broader initiative being launched called 'Sanitation and Water for All: A Global Framework for Action' (SWA). See more at http://www.unwater.org/activities_san4all.html
- End Water Poverty has produced a short series of recommendations for ministers attending the High-Level Meeting, signed by 120 organisations worldwide. See www.endwaterpoverty.org/hlmmanifesto
- End Water Poverty has been campaigning across the world, mobilising over one million people, to call for a global deal to ensure sanitation and water for all.
- One month ago, on World Water Day, tens of thousands of people in 80 countries joined up to form the *World's Longest Toilet Queue* – the first ever coordinated mass campaign on sanitation and water. You can see a video at <http://bit.ly/cVyosV>, photos at <http://tinyurl.com/y5lkvyg>, and request hi-res versions, by emailing serenaosullivan@endwaterpoverty.org.

Some key statistics relating to water and sanitation include:

- 2.2 million child deaths per year could be prevented with to safe sanitation and water.
- Half the hospital beds in Sub-Saharan Africa are taken up with diarrhoeal diseases.
- Poor sanitation is given as the reason for half the girls dropping out of school in Africa.
- Every \$1 invested in sanitation gives a \$9 economic return
- 5% of African GDP is lost because of sanitation and water illnesses every year