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Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Headquarters,
First Avenue at 46th Street,
New York, NY 10017

12th September 2008

Dear Secretary General

Championing sanitation and water at the UN High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

We are writing as supporters of End Water Poverty, a coalition of over 100 NGOs in over 35 countries, and on behalf of almost one million people worldwide who have pledged their support over the last 18 months for bold action to meet the sanitation and water MDG targets.

End Water Poverty welcomes your strong leadership in convening the UN High-Level Event on the MDGs, as well as your support for the International Year of Sanitation. We believe that in order to make the achievement of the MDGs a reality, the High-Level Event should focus on agreeing concrete measures to accelerate progress in those sectors that are most off track, and those most pivotal in driving progress in other areas.

We therefore encourage you to use your influence to ensure that the High-Level Event agrees concrete actions to meet the sanitation and water MDG targets. It is well known that achieving the MDGs on child mortality, gender equality and primary education will be impossible without a breakthrough in sanitation and water. We also know that on current trends the MDG targets on sanitation will not be met in Sub-Saharan Africa until the 22nd Century.

2008 has seen welcome progress, including commitments made at the African Conference on Sanitation in February, the EU Council in June, and the AU and G8 Summits in July. The High-Level Event provides an opportunity to implement these commitments, and go further to forge a global agreement that could provide a breakthrough for the nearly 900m people worldwide who lack access to clean water, and the 2.5 billion people lack access to safe sanitation.

To make the High-Level Event a success, we in civil society are united in calling for three key actions to be agreed in order to meet the sanitation and water MDG targets:

- An annual review and high-level meeting to drive and monitor global progress in the sector
- The development of costed and coordinated national water and sanitation plans
- A commitment that no credible national plan should fail through a lack of finance

At the launch of the UN International Year of Sanitation last November you called on “the international community, national governments and civil society to take up the cause of sanitation with unprecedented vigour”. We fully endorse your sentiments and hope that you will support us once again this September.

Yours sincerely

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