How the World Walked for Water and Sanitation in 2012

17-25 March 2012
www.worldwalksforwater.org
Campaigners across the globe walked in solidarity with the millions of people who walk for miles every day to collect water and the 2.5 billion who have no private and safe place to go to the toilet. They walked to demand that governments take action to end the crisis that keeps children out of school and women from earning a living, and that kills almost 2,000 children every day.

From 17th to 25th March 2012, 380,000 people in over 70 countries walked for water and sanitation.

I walked because... “We need sanitation programmes that are going to increase the number of people with access to sanitation facilities.” Catherine Mwango (African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation)

“I want to see a world where everyone has access to clean water and safe sanitation - that is why I am walking today.” Yati Esther Chimunthu (WaterAid Zambia)

“Women lose so many working hours each day walking for water.” Hon. Maria Mutagamba (Water and Environment minister - Uganda)

“Children in Beykoz, Turkey walked “because we have to share the problems of other children who don’t have clean water, like we share the world.”

I walked because... “Diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children worldwide, killing more than TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDS combined.” Mubu Kalaluka (ROCS Zambia)

I walked “To tell the world that it isn’t acceptable for children to be dying because they don’t have access to clean water and a safe toilet.” Jennifer Williams (End Water Poverty)

TO EVERYONE WHO WALKED FOR WATER AND SANITATION – THANK YOU!
Hundreds of walks took place in over 70 countries from Bangladesh to Benin, Nigeria to Norway and Mozambique to Malaysia. Here are some of the highlights:

- In Malawi, 2,000 school children and members of the local community walked together with the Minister of Rural Affairs calling on the Government of Malawi to increase aid for water and sanitation and better target that funding to those most in need.

- In the USA, over 1,400 people walked with One Drop. The cast of Cirque du Soleil joined in and met with the Mayor of Las Vegas before completing a 5km run in their costumes!

- In Morocco, over 4,500 people took part in walks across the country.

- In Timor-Leste, 100 people walked together through the capital Dili carrying 10 litre jerry cans filled with water so that they could experience what many people living in rural areas of Timor-Leste experience every day. The walk was attended by the Government Department of Infrastructure!

- In India, 1,500 people from the rural communities of Andhra Pradesh united for a rally to demand their right to water and sanitation. FANSA Tamil Nadu mobilised over 1,000 women, children and farmers to walk 22km in 5 walks. While in Kerala, 5,000 people walked in 20 different locations and performed street plays to highlight the importance of water and sanitation to local communities.

- In Australia, walks for water and sanitation took place in every state and territory calling on the Australian government to put an end to the water and sanitation crisis!

- In Bangladesh, over 34,567 school children walked a combined total of 216,391Km on World Water Day – that’s over half way round the world!

- In Nigeria, children walked a combined total of 1,200 people to walk 10km on World Water Day. They were joined by other NGOs.

- In Nigeria, walks met with their local government representative and their constituency representative. Both promised to address the issues faced by those in the local community without access to water and sanitation.

- In Zambia, several hundred people took part through the streets of Lusaka by a police marching band, calling for increased investment in and commitment to water and sanitation.

- In Zambia, 4,500 people took part in walks across the country. In the capital, Anantam, the Minister for Water and Sanitation made a speech declaring the government’s commitment to improving services to meet the needs of the entire Malagasy population.
What the World called for...

The World Walks for Water and Sanitation was a global event calling on governments to take action to end the water and sanitation crisis.

The Campaign called for water and sanitation to become:

**A Political Priority:** Sanitation and water have been neglected by governments for too long. Walkers around the world demanded that politicians recognise its importance and give the crisis the political attention it deserves.

**A Funding Priority:** Thousands of people walked to remind politicians that investment in sanitation and water brings large economic returns through increased productivity and reduced health costs. Every $1 spent on water and sanitation brings an $8 return by keeping people healthy and productive. Walkers called for increased funding for water and sanitation to make sure that every country with a good plan to ensure services for their citizens can deliver it, and called for better targeted funding to ensure money goes to those countries and communities most in need.

**Included in health, nutrition and education plans:** Improving access to clean water and adequate sanitation is key to improving health, education and nutrition. Walkers called on leaders to increase coordination amongst national ministries and ensure that donor programmes are more integrated.

A key focus of the campaign has been the 2012 Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting in Washington, which represented a unique opportunity for Finance, Sector and Development Ministers from across the world to come together to take action on these demands and develop concrete partnerships and commitments.

**In the South,** campaigners walked to call on their national Ministers of Finance, Ministers of Water and Sanitation and other related sector ministers to attend this important meeting and to come ready to make commitments for action to increase access to water and sanitation.

**In the North,** campaigners walked to call on their Ministers of International Development to attend the meeting, and to come committed to increase and better target funding to those countries and communities most in need.
In Uganda, the Minister for Water and Environment joined the walk and signed a pledge endorsing political and funding commitments to water and sanitation and the inclusion of water and sanitation in plans to ensure health, nutrition and education for all.

In Timor-Leste, the Ambassador of Australia and the Minister of Infrastructure delivered speeches on the importance of prioritising increased access to clean water and sanitation in rural areas.

In Zambia, the Minister of Lusaka said that water and sanitation deserved more attention.

In the United States, the Mayor of Las Vegas endorsed the importance of water and sanitation by joining the cast of Cirque Du Soleil at the start of their 5km run!

In Madagascar, representatives from the Ministries for Water and Sanitation, Education and Health joined the walk and the Minister for Water and Sanitation made a speech declaring the government’s commitment to meet the needs of the entire Malagasy population.

In Nigeria, campaigners in Ehime Mbano met the Local Government Chairman who listened to the problems of people in the local community without access to clean water and sanitation. As a result the Chairman promised to present the campaigners’ proposal for creating a new community water and sanitation programme to the Local Council.

In Sierra Leone, representatives from the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources supported the campaign by joining the walks in Freetown.

Ministers of Finance and Sector Ministers attended the meeting from Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Donor country ministers attended from Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Ministers of Water, Sanitation, Environment and Health from 40 countries across Africa and Asia committed by 2014 to:

- decrease open defecation by 15%
- improve water service access by 5%
- increase access to safe sanitation services by 7%

These promises would provide 56 million people with sanitation over the next two years.

Kenya has committed to providing an additional 20 million people with access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015.

Benin has committed to increasing its budget allocations for 2013-2014 by 100% per year for basic sanitation.

Nigeria has promised to progressively increase the budget allocation for water and sanitation over the next three years.

The UK has doubled their commitment to reach 30 million people with water and sanitation to 60 million over the next three years.

Germany has committed to reaching 30 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015, including better targeting funding to the poorest and most vulnerable.

The Dutch Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation, Ben Knapen, announced a new initiative between the Netherlands and UK to bring water and sanitation to an additional 10 million people in nine countries in West and Central Africa. In all, the Netherlands intends to scale up its assistance to reach 25 million more people globally over the next four years.

Thank you for walking for water and sanitation! Governments have listened and made commitments that will provide safe water and sanitation to millions of people!

Now it’s time to hold governments to account and make sure that they keep their promises!

The World Walks for Water and Sanitation and End Water Poverty are funded by the Dutch WASH Alliance, Tearfund, WaterAid and the WSSCC.