

## SANITATION FOR ALL



## THE DRIVE TO 2015

## SUSTAINABLE SANITATION: THE FIVE YEAR DRIVE TO 2015

[sanitationdrive2015.org](http://sanitationdrive2015.org)

### Sanitation for all: making the right a reality

**Adequate sanitation is crucial for poverty reduction, crucial for sustainable development, and crucial for achieving any and every one of the Millennium Development Goals.**

*Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General*

**2.6 billion people** lack access to **basic sanitation**: 40% of the world's population.

#### The UN commitment

The target set for Millennium Development Goal 7 is to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”.

On 28 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly, through **Resolution A/RES/64/292** declared safe and clean drinking water and sanitation to be a human right essential to the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights.

#### Why is it important?

Declaring that access to sanitation and water is a human right constitutes an important step towards making it a reality for everyone. It means that:

- Access to basic sanitation and safe water is an entitlement, rather than a commodity or a service provided on a charitable basis;
- Achieving basic and improved levels of sanitation and water supply services should be accelerated;
- The least served are better targeted, and thus inequalities should be reduced;
- Communities and vulnerable groups will be empowered to take part in decision-making processes;
- The means and mechanisms available within the United Nations human rights system will be used to monitor the progress that nations make towards realizing the right to water and sanitation and to hold governments accountable.

#### How far are we from achieving this right?

The United Nations has declared that access to water and sanitation are human rights, but billions of people around the world are a long way from realizing these rights.



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The world is sadly off-track to meet the MDG target. At the current rate of progress, the world will miss the sanitation MDG target by 13 percentage points, meaning that in 2015 there will still be 2.7 billion people without access to improved sanitation. At this rate the MDG target will not be met until 2049. To achieve universal access will take even longer.

Further, it is clear that the most disadvantaged in society are the worst affected; lack of access to basic sanitation and drinking water is both a cause and effect of poverty.

### What can be done?

Concerted action is needed if we are to turn the right to water and sanitation into a reality. In 2010 the United Nations called for a redoubling of efforts towards meeting the MDG targets and lent its support to a global effort – *Sustainable sanitation: the five year drive to 2015*.

Over the coming years, the Drive to 2015 will advocate for increased political focus on sanitation, better targeting of funding, coordinated efforts based on proven successes, involvement of communities and individuals in decision making and efforts to ensure that all people have access to information and services.

Importantly, we are calling for an end to open defecation – the practice whereby people around the world are forced to defecate in fields, by rivers, on roadsides, because they have no access to a latrine or toilet.

Achievement of the MDG target will be a first milestone, but eventually our target is sanitation for all people.

The call for improved sanitation is based on firm evidence demonstrating that:

- Sanitation is vital for good health.
- Sanitation brings dignity, equality and safety.
- Sanitation is a good economic investment.
- Sanitation sustains clean environments.

### Common misconceptions

Misconception	Clarification
The right entitles people to free sanitation	Sanitation services need to be sustainable and affordable for all. People are expected to contribute financially or otherwise to the extent that they can.
The right entitles everyone to a household service	Sanitation facilities need to be within, or in the vicinity of the household, and can comprise facilities such as pit latrines.
A country is in violation of the right if not all its people have access to sanitation	The right requires that a state take steps to progressively realise the right, using the maximum of resources available.

### Who is involved?

The Drive to 2015 grew out of an initiative within the United Nations. The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation proposed the idea and called on others working in a range of sectors to join the effort. UN-Water, the association of all UN bodies working on water and sanitation issues, is coordinating the work. A number of civil society groups around the globe have pledged their support and are in the process of defining concrete activities that will contribute to achieving the objective of sanitation for all people.

If you would like to join the Drive to 2015, more information can be found at [www.sanitationdrive2015.org](http://www.sanitationdrive2015.org).

Main sources: UN-Water DPAC, WSSCC