

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

19 November 2014

Dear Secretary-General,

On World Toilet Day, 19 November, we the undersigned are writing to you on behalf of the 2.5 billion people who face a daily health crisis. When they wake each day they are unable to do what we take for granted: relieve themselves in a clean, safe toilet.

In the developing world, over 1,400 children under the age of five will die today of a diarrhoeal disease simply because they and their families do not have access to clean drinking water, a basic toilet or a safe way to deal with human waste. Nor do they have sufficient water to keep their hands and bodies clean. We know that you share our grave concern on this critical issue.

This crisis touches the lives of hundreds of millions of children, from birth to adulthood, if they are lucky enough to make it that far. Undernutrition, linked to chronic diarrhoeal illness, is estimated to have stunted the development of around 162 million children, often leaving a lifelong legacy of poverty and ill-health. Diarrhoea also significantly contributes to acute malnutrition, a condition which is estimated to kill one million children every year. To make matters worse, health professionals are often expected to deliver quality healthcare in unhygienic facilities that lack basic sanitation and clean water, putting patients' lives at risk.

As you know, the impact of poor sanitation goes beyond health. One in three women and girls around the world do not have access to basic toilets and risk their safety every time they must find a place to relieve themselves. Girls who attend schools without safe, private, separate toilets are more likely to drop out during puberty, depriving themselves of the education that can help break the cycle of poverty.

The British Medical Journal has identified sanitation as the most important invention in the past 150 years, more critical than antibiotics and immunisations. Yet, of the UN's existing Millennium Development Goals, the target for sanitation remains one of the most off-track. An estimated ten million children have died from diarrhoeal diseases in the years since the goals were launched.

We have a moment now to change this. You can change this.

As the UN shapes the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals, this needless tragedy can be ended by ensuring the poorest people in the world get access to safe water, sanitation and improved hygiene.

We call on you to lead the world to a future of better health, dignity and prosperity for all by championing a dedicated goal to deliver water and sanitation to everyone, everywhere by 2030.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Teguest Guerma, Director General, **Amref Health Africa**  
Dr Anne Trimmer, Secretary General, **Australian Medical Association**  
Dr Mahmud Hasan and M Iqbal Arslan, President and Secretary General, **Bangladesh Medical Association**  
Au Jamil Falsel, President, **Bangladesh Public Health Association**  
Dr Roland Lemye, President, **Belgium Medical Association**  
Dr Kaosar Afsana MD MPH PhD, Director of Health Nutrition and Population, **BRAC University** (Bangladesh)  
Dr Florentino Cardoso, President, **Brazilian Medical Association**  
Baroness Illora Finlay, President, **British Medical Association**  
Dr Solaiman Juman FRCS, President, **Commonwealth Medical Association**  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu, **The Elders**  
Dr Abiy Hiruye, President, Executive Director, **Ethiopia Medical Association**  
Ben Hobbs, Coalition Secretariat, **Generation Nutrition**  
Dr Henry Baddoo, President, **Ghana Anaesthetists Society**  
G C Adangabey, President, **Ghana Federation of Allied Health Professionals**  
Mr Ken Ameovi Gbeve, President, **Ghana Health Information Management Association**  
Dr Kwabena Opuka-Aduessi, President, **Ghana Medical Association**  
James William, President, **Ghana Society of Radiographers**  
Dr Zulfiqar A Bhutta, Director, **Global Child Health – Canada**  
Dr Christine Sow, Executive Director, **Global Health Council**  
Dr Muhammed M Lecky, Executive Secretary, **Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria**  
Dr Istvan Éger, President, **Hungarian Medical Chamber**  
Dr Madhumita Dobe, Chairperson, **Indian Public Health Association**  
Dr Narendra Saini, Honorary Secretary General, **Indian Medical Association**  
Lord Ara Darzi, Director, **Institute of Global Health Innovation**  
Frances Ganges, Chief Executive, **International Confederation of Midwives**  
David C. Benton, Chief Executive Officer, **International Council of Nurses**  
Dr Moojin Choo, President, **Korean Medical Association**  
Atty. John Y Jukon, National Chairman, **Liberia NGOs Network**  
Dr Amedeo Bianco, President, **National Federation of the Orders of Doctors and Dentists** (Italy)  
Dr J G Ado Mohammed, Executive Director, **National Primary Health Care Development Agency** (Nigeria)  
Dr Anjani Kumar Jha, President, **Nepal Medical Association**  
Bhogendra Raj Dotel, President, **Nepal Public Health Association**  
Dr Lawrence Kayode Obembe, President, **Nigerian Medical Association**  
Eche Ugochukwu C, President, **Nigerian Medical Students Association**  
Pramila Dewan, President, **Nursing Association of Nepal**  
Dr Javed Iqbal, Chairman, **Pakistan Medical Association**  
**People's Health Movement – Pakistan Chapter**  
Dr James O Kyei, President, **Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana**  
Simon Ross, Chief Executive, **Population Matters**  
Professor Mike Pringle, President, **Royal College of General Practitioners**  
Bello Hamman Diram, Secretary General, **Nigerian Red Cross Society**  
Barbara Frost, Chief Executive, **WaterAid**  
Katja Iveresen and Jill Sheffield, CEO and President, **Women Deliver**  
Mengistu Asnake, President, **World Federation of Public Health Associations**  
Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, Chairman, **World Medical Association**  
Dr Elizabeth Mason, Former Director of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health,

## **World Health Organization**

Dip Bahadur Shahi, Certified Medical Assistant, **Abnkar Medical Hall, Karnali, Nepal**  
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Hon. Ganesh Shah, **Former Minister for Environment, Science and Technology , Nepal**  
Madhumita Dobe, Chairperson, **Indian Academy of Public Health**  
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Saroj Dhital, Founder Member, BOD Phect-NEPAL, Sr. Consultant Surgeon, **Kathmandu Model Hospital, Nepal**  
Tularam Pandey, District Coordinator, **KIRDARC, Nepal**  
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Shankar Rai, Director and Chief of Chief of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department, Kirtiour Hospital, **PHECT**  
Durga B. Gurung, Supervisor, **Pokhara District Hospital, Nepal**  
Robertetta Rose, Advocacy Coordinator, **WASH Consortium in Liberia**, including **Concern Worldwide, Tearfund, Action Contre La Faim, Oxfam, and Population Services International**  
Rabin Bastola, Technical Advisor, **WASH Research Centre Network, Nepal**  
Anil Sthapit, General Secretary, **Water and Sanitation NGO Forum, Nepal**

cc H E Mr Jan Eliasson, **Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations**  
Amina J Mohamed, **Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning**