



JOIN THE MOVEMENT



The **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs** is coordinating IYS, in collaboration with stakeholders including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, UN-Habitat, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, the UN Environment Programme, the UN Development Programme, UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia.

A Sanitation Task Force has been formed to lead activities among the several member organizations of **UN-Water** undertaking IYS activities and initiatives in both the developed and developing worlds.

**Join the movement! Get involved!
For Health For Dignity**

To find out what you can do to help, please contact: sanitation@un.org

Website: <http://esa.un.org/iys/>

Key Messages

The excreta of 2.6 billion people is uncollected/untreated and represents a global health crisis. More than 200 million tonnes of human waste (and untold millions of tonnes of waste water and solid waste) goes uncollected and untreated annually around the world – in parts of both developing and developed countries – exposing millions of people to disease and death and continuing a cycle of poverty. More than 2.6 billion people, including 980 million children, live without proper sanitation; every 20 seconds on average a child dies as a direct result. That's 1.5 million preventable child deaths a year;

Proper sanitation and hygiene is a necessary and worthwhile investment for governments at every level in every country. For every dollar spent improving sanitation and hygiene, between \$3 and \$34 is saved in health, education and social and economic development. In addition to countless school days lost to sanitation-related illness, the lack of adequate, separate sanitation facilities denies many girls an education and future economic potential;

Achieving adequate sanitation worldwide is doable. Governments and corporations need to support household and community decision-making processes and help finance the infrastructure and programmes required. The estimated annual cost of reaching the water and sanitation MDG target is \$11.3 billion, less than annual North American spending on household pets;

Take the next step. The general public needs to make their support for improved sanitation known to governments at all levels;

Doing nothing is no longer an option.

IYS Planning Includes:

- Public awareness research;
- News media outreach through story campaigns and television public service announcements;
- Information booklets, brochures and fact sheets;
- Support to regional, national and local initiatives;
- School curricula modules;
- Political, corporate, academic, religious and celebrity advocates and ambassadors.

IYS Launch

The official launch of IYS is tentatively scheduled for UN Headquarters, New York, on **19 November, 2007.**

A number of special UN days in 2008 are available to amplify IYS messages. These include:

- 22 March – **World Water Day** (dedicated exclusively to the sanitation issue in 2008)
- 7 April – **World Health Day**
- 5 June – **World Environment Day**
- 8 September – **World Literacy Day**
- 6 October – **World Habitat Day**, and
- 10 October – **International Day for Disaster Reduction**



Enlightened Self-interest: Sanitation for All

In the mid-1800s, cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria, measles, smallpox and typhoid were among a suite of infectious diseases causing countless deaths each year. Politicians in many countries began to realize that upgrading the sanitation infrastructure of their poorest neighbourhoods was in the enlightened self-interest of broader society. Their goal: **to eliminate incubators of disease.**

The dramatic results of efforts by those 19th century leaders were recently recognized in 2007 when the esteemed British Medical Journal named public sanitation **the world's "greatest medical breakthrough"** since 1840. To 11,000 global survey respondents, sanitation engineering represented a health breakthrough greater than the discoveries of antibiotics, anesthesia, vaccines and DNA.

Yet in 2007 **roughly one third of humanity** lacks an adequate toilet, one of the most basic and important building blocks of health.

The deadly scourge of health problems related to inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene practices continues in scores of countries. Coupled with rapid globalization of travel and trade, **today it is in the enlightened self-interest of all to address poor sanitation everywhere.** Proper sanitation is essential to the dignity of all people, key to combatting poverty, and crucial to ensuring **fundamental human rights** are met.

International Year of Sanitation

When they endorsed the eight **UN Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) in 2000, all countries and all leading development institutions pledged to "halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation."

Without improving sanitation around the world, none of the MDGs can be achieved. Sanitation conditions impact health and child mortality, poverty reduction, the empowerment of women and girls, school attendance, the environment, and economic and social development.

In 2006, the UN General Assembly designated **2008 the International Year of Sanitation (IYS).** Its objective: to promote improved hygiene practices and accelerate progress on **providing proper sanitation for the 2.6 billion people who lack access to this basic human right** in order to save lives and foster economic and social development.

IYS will help position the issue higher on the global agenda by increasing its profile with politicians, civil society and the general public. **IYS will focus on the need to take effective action.**

IYS Objectives

The **principal objective** is to dramatically increase both the number of people with access to proper sanitation and the number who practise good hygiene.

IYS will help **build awareness of sanitation and hygiene issues** – health, economic and social – across a broad spectrum of audiences as a prelude to greater political will and support for the required financial commitments.

It aims to secure **concrete commitments** from actors at all levels, including accurate information based on sound monitoring, and seek agreement on what steps are most urgently required and who will take responsibility for them.

It aims to develop and strengthen **institutional and human capacities;**

Sanitation is "a dirty word" in many cultures, and toilets are not discussed in "polite company." IYS aims to make sanitation a topic discussed without embarrassment.

Key Audiences

Political decision-makers, key to achieving the sanitation MDG. They will be urged, directly and through their constituencies, to take action. Heads of state and governments, as well as ministers and officials with responsibility for infrastructure, health, finance, social affairs and foreign affairs, all need to be engaged;

The general public, who must become more interested in sanitation issues in order to foster broader political and social activism;

Community and women's groups, essential to changing sanitation and hygiene practices aided by health education campaigns;

The news media, for whom sanitation is a topic largely and unjustly overlooked – until calamity causes its loss and illness results;

Academics, who teach or conduct research into IYS-relevant topics, including development, public health, civil engineering and political science;

Corporate leaders, who will be urged to increase participation in sanitation projects and to carry messages to fora such as the Davos World Economic Forum;

Religious leaders, who greatly influence public opinion in many communities, will be encouraged to help inform their congregations of sanitation issues.