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
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
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
Korto Williams, Country Director, ActionAid Liberia
Kalpana Shahi, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, Alna Medical, Karnali, Nepal
Tula Ram, CMA, Bista Medical, Karnali, Nepal
Durga Bahadur Shahi, Chairperson, Community Police Service Centre, Nepal
Ishwar Man Amatya, MSC Coordinator, District Health Office, Karnali, Nepal
Katak Bahadur Mahat, DRRT Focal Person, Snr AHW Officer, Dolpa District Hospital, Nepal
Samjhana, Senior Auxiliary Health Worker, Dolpa District Hospital, Nepal
Hon. Ganesh Shah, Former Minister for Environment, Science and Technology, Nepal
Madhumita Dobe, Chairperson, Indian Academy of Public Health
Suman Tamang, Kalikot District Hospital, Nepal
Durga Prasad Acharya, Snr Auxilliary Health Worker, Kalikot District Hospital, Nepal
Surya Man Shakya, Kathmandu University
Saroj Dhital, Founder Member, BOD Phect-NEPAL, Sr. Consultant Surgeon, Kathmandu Model Hospital, Nepal
Tularam Pandey, District Coordinator, KIRDARC, Nepal
Yam Bahadur Malla, Snr. Auxilliary Health Worker, Mugu District Hospital, Nepal
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 la Faime, 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