

# Sanitation is not a Dirty Word!

Sanitation and hygiene are key to child survival, development and growth. Improved sanitation has yet to reach 2.6 billion people in the developing world. The result is not surprising and yet it is shocking: millions of children die each year from preventable diseases. These numbers are of epidemic proportions: the time for action is now. Like HIV/AIDS in the 1980's we must break the Taboo!

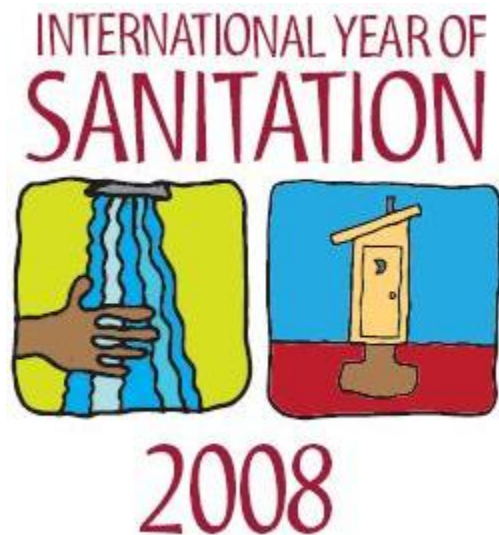
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## IYS 2008

Improved hygiene behaviours coupled with access to toilets not only lowers child mortality rates it also increases the number of girls that go to school, reduces malnutrition and infection rates and affords a greater dignity and privacy for all, particularly women who suffer disproportionately from the lack of safe, clean toilets.

Recognizing the cross-cutting importance of sanitation to *all* of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN General Assembly declared 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation (IYS). The IYS aims to raise a broader awareness and to accelerate global efforts to achieve MDG #7 - halving the proportion of people without access to improved sanitation.



## Sanitation is...

- ◆ **Vital for health.** Poor hygiene and lack of access to toilets together account for 1.5 million diarrhoea-related under-five deaths each year. Children weakened by frequent diarrhoea episodes are also more vulnerable to malnutrition and opportunistic infections such as pneumonia.
- ◆ **A good economic investment.** Improved sanitation has positive impacts on economic growth and poverty reduction. According to a recent WHO study, every dollar spent on improving sanitation generates an average economic benefit of \$9.1. The economic cost of inaction is astronomical.
- ◆ **Social development.** Where adequate sanitation is coupled with improved hygiene behaviours the following improvements could be expected: less illness; improved nutrition among children; increased learning and retention among school children; higher work productivity among adults and importantly, more dignity and privacy for everybody especially women and girls.
- ◆ **Helping the environment.** Improved disposal of human waste protects the quality of drinking water sources. Each year more than 200 million tonnes of human waste go uncollected and untreated around the world, fouling the environment and exposing millions of people to disease and squalor.
- ◆ **Achievable!** *Now* is the time to act. We can influence political leaders to act now. The estimated \$9.5 billion annual cost to halve the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015 is affordable. If sustained, the same investment could achieve basic sanitation for the entire world within one or two decades.

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