



THE UN DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL'S  
**Call to Action on SANITATION**

## **FAST FACTS**

### **Big picture**

- 1.8 billion people gained access to adequate sanitation since 1990.
- The number of people resorting to open defecation – the riskiest sanitation practice – has decreased by 271 million since 1990.
- 1.1 billion people, or 15 per cent of the global population, practice open defecation.
- 20 countries, mostly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, account for over 80 per cent of open defecation in the world.
- 2.5 billion people – roughly 37 per cent of the world's population – still lack what many of us take for granted: access to adequate sanitation.

### **Human impact**

- Open defecation is one of the main causes of diarrhoea, which results in the deaths of more than 750,000 children under age 5 every year.
- Each year, children lose 272 million school days due to diarrhoea.
- Each day about 3,000 children under age 5 die as a result of diarrhoea, most before their second birthday.

### **Economic impact**

- Doing nothing is costly. Every US \$1 spent on sanitation brings a \$5.50 return by keeping people healthy and productive.
- The global economic gains from investing in sanitation and water are estimated at \$260 billion per year.
- Poor sanitation, on the other hand, costs countries between 0.5 and 7.2 per cent of their GDP:
  - \$448 million/7.2 per cent of GDP in Cambodia
  - \$53.8 billion/6.4 per cent of GDP in India
  - \$6.3 billion/2.3 per cent of GDP in Indonesia
  - \$17.5 million/2.0 per cent of GDP in Liberia
  - \$4.2 billion/6.3 per cent of GDP in Pakistan
  - \$3 billion/1.3 per cent of GDP in Nigeria

Sources: Big picture and Human impact: WHO/UNICEF. Economic impact: World Bank.  
For more information, visit: [www.sanitationdrive2015.org](http://www.sanitationdrive2015.org)