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**REMARKS AT HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON INVESTING
IN SANITATION**

Washington D.C., 19 April 2013

**Moderator,
Fellow Panelists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good afternoon. I am pleased to see so many familiar faces from last year's Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting. Last year we talked about commitments. Today I want to talk about action.

But first let me ask a question recently directed to me by Kate Norgrove of Water Aid. Have you ever been caught short and wondered where to find a toilet? Probably a painful or embarrassing moment. Let us then remember that 2.5 billion people do not have toilets! This is their daily situation. In New York, where I live, you will only find public toilets in Central Park. It is a problem common to most towns and cities.

Recently I was in Addis Ababa. I visited a small sanitation project called Feyenne in the town of Bishoftu, southeast of Addis. Feyenne, which is supported by UNICEF and the Oromia Bureau of Youth and Sports, is run by three young men who used to live on the streets. In their small office was a chalk board with one word written on it. "Sustainability". Their approach to sustainability was to tackle the sanitation problem as a business. They had identified a need, and they had decided to fill it.

The concept was simple – to provide a safe, clean public facility at low cost near the main market. With money from the toilet project, Feyenne has been able to open additional income generating activities that provide employment opportunities for vulnerable young people. It is a model that is needed – and replicable.

Sanitation is the Millennium Development Goal on which we have made least progress. Yet, it is among the most important. Success on sanitation has a direct bearing on the other Goals, and it will be central to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. It is an issue of fundamental human dignity and the health of people and the environment. Out, of the 2.5 billion people without sanitation, more than 1 billion people defecate in the open.

That is why, last month, I, launched a Call to Action for Sanitation on behalf of the UN Secretary-General. The objective is to galvanize major players to do more by building on two key on-going initiatives – the UN General Assembly Sanitation Drive and the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.

The Sanitation Drive calls on all Member States to intensify efforts and focuses on communication and advocacy. It is essential to get people to think about and openly discuss sanitation and open defecation. We need to break the taboos.

The other initiative, Sanitation and Water for All, has over 91 global partners. Last year I moderated the second Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting held here. More than 50 Ministers attended and some 400 commitments were tabled. In June, we will have the results of these commitments, with a full report next year. Heads of State, members of Government and other actors need to know what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

We have already seen the results of some of these commitments. For example, in Ethiopia, the Government has endorsed a Unified Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. And in Madagascar the Government has created a Directorate of Sanitation.

Someone is made responsible. That is one of the problems that has been holding back progress. Sanitation often does not have a clear institutional home or clear accountability. In 2014, UNICEF and the World Bank will convene the third Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting. I look forward to registering progress and new commitments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are three things we can do to speed up progress on sanitation. First, we can scale up the projects that work. Simple, affordable action has already proved its worth. Between 1990 and 2010, about 1.8 billion people gained access to sanitation – a significant achievement. Many countries have tackled this problem within a generation. They have shown that we can achieve our targets.

Second, we must speed up the elimination of open defecation – country by country, community by community, family by family. We need to ensure that everyone has access to a clean and safe toilet. We need to change attitudes and generate demand. We need to talk about the problem, not turn our heads.

And finally, we need to strengthen cooperation and boost investment. The cost of poor sanitation can be counted both in human lives and lost productivity. According to a study undertaken for the Water and Sanitation Programme and the World Bank, inadequate sanitation costs the Indian economy an estimated \$53.8 billion a year, equivalent to 6.4 per cent of GDP. On the other hand, we know that every dollar spent on water and sanitation can bring a five-fold return. The economic benefits for developing countries are estimated at \$260 billion a year.

The public sector has major stake to play. But, the private sector also has a major stake. There is a considerable market – millions of customers need an essential service. Opportunities abound for everyone from multinationals to local entrepreneurs.

If we all do our part, we can achieve substantial results. So, let us commit now to provide adequate sanitation and safe water for all and stop open defecation – so that women and girls can live with dignity; so that our children can survive and communities can thrive.

Investing in sanitation is a win-win proposition – ensuring that millions of people can live productive lives, the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved and healthy societies can be built.

There are only winners if we all mobilize. Nobody can do everything - but everybody can do something.

Thank you.

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