

NEWS

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Turn On Your Tap And Consider The More Than One Billion People With No Access To Safe Water On World Water Day – March 22 – Urges Hilton Foundation

—Unsafe water is the No. 1 public health crisis in the world; one in six people globally have no access to clean water—

LOS ANGELES, March 17, 2008 – When Americans turn on their taps on World Water Day this Saturday, March 22, 2008, they are urged by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to stop and consider the more than one billion people around the world who cannot take for granted an abundant supply of safe and clean water. The foundation is a philanthropic pioneer in water development for needy populations in the developing world.

“A global lack of safe water is the biggest public health crisis in the world,” says Steven M. Hilton, president and CEO of the Hilton Foundation. “Eighty percent of all illness in the developing world stems from contaminated water and poor sanitation.” He points out that 1.1 billion people around the world, or one in six people, lack access to clean drinking water while 2.6 billion people, or two in six, lack access to adequate sanitation.

The enormous public health consequences include:

- More than 2.2 million people die each year from diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitary conditions (WHO/UNICEF/WSSCC — Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council)

- Every week, 42,000 people die of diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitary conditions; more than 90 percent of them are children under age five (WHO/UNICEF)
- Diarrhea, which can be caused by germs in dirty water, is the third largest killer of children under five years of age (WHO)
- In sub-Saharan Africa, a baby's chance of dying from diarrhea is almost 520 times the chance of a baby in Europe or the U.S. (WHO/UNICEF)
- Other serious diseases from contaminated water and poor sanitation are guinea worm and trachoma which is the world's leading cause of preventable blindness (International Trachoma Initiative)
- At any one time, half of the world's hospital beds are filled with patients suffering from water-borne diseases (UN)
- According to the United Nations, 1.7 million people could be saved each year if they had safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (UN World Water Development Report, March, 2006)

Unclean water also has devastating economic and social consequences. Women and girls spend their days walking miles in search of clean water, instead of earning money for their families or going to school.

"For all these reasons, bringing safe water and sanitation to communities in the developing world has been one of our foundation's top priorities," says Hilton. "The foundation began working in this area in 1990, and we are proud to have been at the forefront in investing in potable water. We are particularly pleased that now so many other foundations, corporations, NGOs and donors are joining in the effort to bring safe water and better sanitation to the developing world," noted Hilton.

The Hilton Foundation has committed more than \$62 million to provide clean, sustainable sources of water that have benefited nearly one million people in Africa and Southern Mexico.

Based in Los Angeles, the Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by the late hotel entrepreneur and business leader, Conrad N. Hilton, who left his fortune to the foundation with instructions to help the most disadvantaged and vulnerable throughout the world without regard to religion, ethnicity or geography. The foundation along with its related

entities has assets exceeding \$4.3 billion, and since its inception, has committed more than \$780 million for charitable projects throughout the world. More than 50% of its grants fund international projects.

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For more information, visit www.hiltonfoundation.org