

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**VIDEO MESSAGE FOR FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF SANITATION
Tokyo, 26-27 January 2010**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to greet all the participants in this important follow-up conference on the International Year of Sanitation. I thank the Government of Japan for organizing this event, and for being such a leader in this vital area.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince of Japan, who is present at this conference. His dedication as Honorary President of my Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation is playing a valuable role in efforts to achieve the MDG target.

I am also grateful for the contributions of His Royal Highness Willem-Alexander, Prince of the Netherlands, and all the other members of the board.

The MDG sanitation target seeks to increase the proportion of people with access to improved sanitation facilities from 54 to 77 per cent. The latest figures indicate access is at 62 per cent.

As many as 2.5 billion people are still living without improved sanitation.

Sanitation is fundamental for human dignity. But it is also crucial for achieving other critical goals, from health to environmental protection to reducing infant and maternal mortality.

The members of my Advisory Board and many others around the world have raised their voices about the sanitation crisis. They helped bring about the International Year itself, which was observed in 2008 and which by all accounts helped raise awareness and support for sanitation actions.

We must sustain that momentum. The world has the know-how, the workable solutions and the resources to reach the MDG sanitation target. Now, we need results.

This conference can help. I look forward to your contributions, including at this year's MDG Summit at the United Nations in September.

And I offer my best wishes for the success of your deliberations in Tokyo. Thank you.