

Response to WaterAid campaign on World Toilet Day and sanitation

Thank you for your getting in touch about the WaterAid campaign on World Toilet Day and sanitation.

The UK Government believes that access to clean and safe water, sanitation and hygiene are among the most basic of human needs. It is shocking that even today 2.5 billion people do not have a proper toilet. While it was encouraging that the Millennium Development Goal target on drinking water was met in 2010, over 760 million people do not have access to clean water and we still have much to do.

The importance of meeting the need for water and sanitation led the UK to commit in 2012 to support 60 million people in poor countries to gain access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene by December 2015. I am pleased to say we are on-track to meet this commitment.

In his role as the Co-Chair of the High Level Panel, the Prime Minister took a leading role in directing the discussions about the post-2015 development agenda. Since then, the Open Working Group has also reported proposing a set of goals and targets. The UK Government considers water and sanitation to be key elements in the final post-2015 framework and we are working with others to build agreement on how they are best reflected in the final framework.

The UK is leading the international response to the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone. To date the UK has committed £230 million to defeating this deadly virus. Our support includes ensuring that treatment centres and community care centres have adequate sanitation to isolate and dispose of the waste from treating Ebola patients. We are also supporting communication campaigns about good hygiene, particularly in relation to the safe burial of those who have died from Ebola, which is critical in controlling the outbreak.

I hope this will reassure you of the importance I attach to supporting the provision of water and sanitation to those people who need it most.

JUSTINE GREENING