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YEARS

Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water

2015 Update and MDG Assessment

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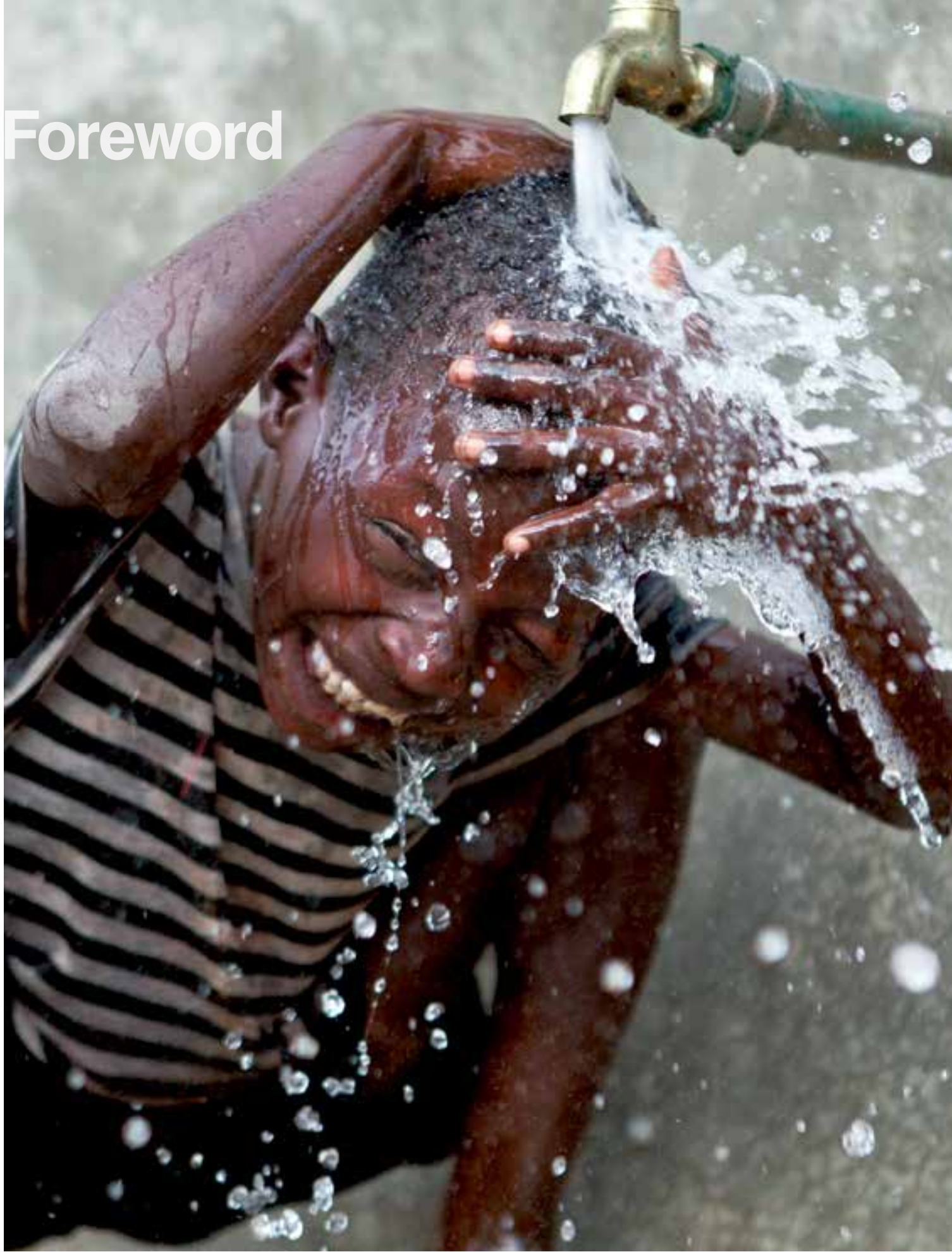


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Foreword



The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the framework that has been a key part of efforts to build a better world for the past 15 years – challenged the global community to reduce by half the proportion of the population without safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Throughout this period, the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) has monitored progress.

As the MDG era comes to a close, this report shows how far we have come. For example, in a major global achievement, the target for safe drinking water was met in 2010, well ahead of the MDG deadline of 2015. Over 90 per cent of the world's population now has access to improved sources of drinking water.

At the same time, the report highlights how far we still have to go. The world has fallen short on the sanitation target, leaving 2.4 billion without access to improved sanitation facilities.

The JMP has also tracked and presented data that shed light on a number of other issues, including inequalities such as the gap between urban and rural residents, the gender burden of water collection and the persistent exclusion of the poor from water and sanitation services.

The insights provided by the JMP data have enabled us to identify specific challenges and strengthen policy-making. For instance, we have seen that we must address not only the widespread need for sanitation, but also the difficult problem of open defecation, still practiced by almost a billion people. Open defecation is one of the clearest manifestations of extreme poverty.

That is why, in 2013, I launched a Call to Action on Sanitation on behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Our aim is to eliminate open defecation by 2025 and to strengthen the partnerships that can make this happen. Addressing the sanitation crisis goes to the heart of ensuring good health, a clean environment and human dignity for all.

Robust data, insightful analysis and compelling presentation will be important as we transition to the Sustainable Development Goals and their imperative to leave no one behind. UNICEF and WHO, through the JMP, have shown leadership in initiating the debate about future targets for water, sanitation and hygiene, and in bringing stakeholders together to discuss a vision for the future.

Water and sanitation are fundamental to human development and well-being. They are not just goals in their own right but also critical to the achievement of other development objectives such as adequate nutrition, gender equality, education and the eradication of poverty. Access to safe water and sanitation is also a human right, as recognized in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly.

The United Nations looks forward to working with its partners across the world to successfully meet the water and sanitation challenge. By that, we can make a life of dignity a reality for millions and millions of people around the world.

Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General



Progress on sanitation and drinking water: 2015 update and MDG assessment

Foreword



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