

WaterAid Supporters' Meeting

10 October 2014

Many thanks Tim and Barbara for your kind invitation. I am delighted to be here today to celebrate WaterAid's tremendous work and to hear your plans for the future.

As Barbara said, in the last year WaterAid reached 1.9 million people with clean water and 2.9 million people with safe sanitation. That is an extraordinary achievement – representing a huge collective effort.

It is sometimes difficult to appreciate the significance of these numbers.

Yet, behind each number is a person. *A life.*

And we know that providing access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene is completely *life changing*. It is *life saving*. And I can not think of a deeper purpose. It should motivate us all.

Good WASH provision links to many other areas of human development - underpinning progress on undernutrition and stunting; health; education and women's empowerment.

It reduces the chances of children getting sick or missing out on vital nutrients; it enables girls to stay in school and women to be free from the burden of collecting water. It also restores basic human dignity.

Universal access to WASH is fundamental to eradicating poverty and enabling inclusive, sustainable economic development.

As such, it is truly transformative - to individual, families and communities. And it is at the very heart of the post 2015 development goals.

By providing water and sanitation, WaterAid helps millions achieve their potential and have a brighter future.

And for this - all of you here today should be extremely proud and I want to thank you on behalf of the millions who benefit from your work (*applause*).

We at Unilever are extremely proud to work with you.

The key now is to take these excellent results and to scale them up for increased impact.

So, while recognising progress we should also acknowledge that there is a long way to go before everyone, everywhere has access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene.

If we are to eradicate poverty by 2030 we must reach the 783 million currently without access to clean drinking water and the 2.5 billion without sanitation.

It's not just about the provision of facilities and infrastructure, but also:

- **making the links between WASH and development areas such as nutrition and health;**

- **educating people about the importance of good sanitation and hygiene;**
- **teaching people life-saving behaviours such as handwashing with soap.**

There are three ways in which I believe we need to do this:

- 1. Policy**
- 2. Partnerships**
- 3. People**

Policy

First, create the public policy environment to support improved access to WASH. We know that setting targets and ways of measuring progress helps galvanize action; focuses resources, and - most important - ensures accountability.

The current negotiation of the new SDGs represents a critical moment in the battle for universal access to WASH. The Open Working Group report, released in June, was very

encouraging – in that Target 6.2 referenced the need to achieve access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all – AND end open defecation. Importantly, it also highlighted the need to target women, girls and those in vulnerable situations.

This is a great start. But the work to ensure WASH receives the necessary attention within the SDGs and beyond is far from over. We must keep up the pressure and provide evidence and proof points to help countries make the case for WASH within the coming intergovernmental negotiations.

In this respect, I am delighted Unilever was able to help WaterAid collect signatures for the Everyone, Everywhere petition this summer – calling on the UK Government to support WASH within the Post-2015 agenda. We presented this petition - signed by 76,711 people from the UK - to DFID during a reception at Unilever’s Blackfriars office in early September.

A week later, we were able to shine a light on WASH during the UN General Assembly in New York – and were pleased to hear from Barbara during a panel session with USAID Administrator Raj Shah and others on the importance of hygiene in tackling preventable newborn and child deaths.

New York also gave me an opportunity to bring former co-panellists from the High Level Panel on Post-2015 together with NGOs, politicians and other business leaders to discuss ways to better align the Climate and Global Development processes and the actions needed to deliver a brighter future.

Our guest speaker Jan Eliasson – who I know is a close friend of WaterAid and former chair of WaterAid Sweden – issued an impassioned plea to work together to deliver an ambitious Post-2015 agenda – highlighting the importance of WASH within this vision.

Many governments and heads of state have heeded his call to action – including Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who I worked closely with on the High Level Panel and who

was appointed a UN Goodwill Ambassador for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Africa.

However, there is still a need to reinforce the importance of WASH - particularly with African leaders - and we must continue to use global platforms like the World Economic Forum in New Delhi next month and Davos in January to raise the profile of WASH and secure the targets and indicators to drive progress.

As well as securing an ambitious global agenda, we know that the right policies at *national* and *regional* level are also essential.

So, I was very pleased to see the launch of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan - 'Clean India' - campaign and his pledge that every household will have a toilet by 2019. As ambitious as President Kennedy's rallying cry to put a man on the moon in 1961.

This would be an astonishing achievement. Almost half the population in India defecates in the open. We must all help the Indian government to meet its ambition and encourage others to do the same.

Partnerships

This brings me to the role of partnerships. At Unilever, we believe that everyone has a role to play in tackling the world's challenges, including business.

That is why we launched the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan to contribute positively to society. Under the Plan, we've committed to help 1 billion people improve their health and wellbeing through improved access to hygiene, nutrition and drinking water. Partnership is at the core.

As part of this, I am delighted to say that we are stepping up our ambition on sanitation and recently announced a new target to help 25 million people gain improved access to toilets by 2020.

This year we also more than doubled our presence in the water purification market by acquiring a majority stake in the Chinese water purification business, Qinyuan.

It is a remarkable story. The owner, Mr Jianrong Ye, a former school teacher, founded the business when his father died – at just 49 – from contaminated drinking water. He told a group of our senior executives earlier this year that: “The only time I cried was when my father died and I vowed then to do something to stop it happening to others”.

And he has. From nothing 15 years ago, Qinyuan today provides improved drinking water to 30 million Chinese and together with our Pureit brand we now provide clean drinking water to nearly 100 million people. No wonder Mr Ye’s catchphrase is, “impossible only means we haven’t found the solution yet”.

By bringing together complementary technology from Pureit and by leveraging Qinyuan’s local marketing insight,

manufacturing and distribution strength – we can reach even more people with safe, affordable drinking water.

We are also leveraging our expertise in behaviour change to teach more children, new mums and health workers about the importance of handwashing with soap, reaching now about 200 million across 16 countries.

All this is good business – driving brand loyalty, opening up new markets and generating returns to invest back in developing innovations like Lifebuoy's patented germ protection technology, Activ Naturol Shield – which will save even more lives.

Yet we can't do this alone. The WASH challenge is simply too large. That's why we work in partnerships – to leverage the expertise, resource and the reach of others to bring about change at scale.

For example, WaterAid joined with Unilever on Project Laser Beam – bringing together partners from different sectors to

tackle the underlying causes of child undernutrition in a holistic way. Through multiple interventions in areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, income generation and micronutrients, Project Laser Beam reached 2.9 million people over 3 years in Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Governments also need to play their part. This summer we were pleased to announce a strategic agreement with DFID to identify and scale up new initiatives to accelerate transformative change in areas such as WASH, women and girls' employment and economic empowerment and sustainable agriculture. Our aim is to improve the lives of 100 million people by 2025 through behaviour change driven by a new digital channel; and developing, and scaling new, social businesses models.

This agreement was brought to life recently when a consortium including WaterAid, WSUP, Plan and Unilever successfully secured £29 million as part of DFID's WASH results challenge fund, to deliver WASH programs in

Bangladesh and Pakistan. Plan and WaterAid will focus on Sanitation and Water supply while Unilever will work with WSUP on handwashing education. The successful bid - which will help millions of lives - shows what can be achieved if we pull together behind a common agenda.

In addition to partnering around specific programmes such as these, the UN High Level Panel on Post-2015 called for a ‘New Global Partnership’. This is more than just implementation through multi-stakeholder partnerships, it’s an ideology of collaboration, of everyone working together in mutual respect for a mutual goal. Committing to this approach is vital if we are to drive transformative change on WASH.

People

People lie at the heart of the ‘New Global Partnership’ vision. We must ensure a people-centred WASH agenda – locally owned, empowering local solutions.

WaterAid has been very successful in putting people at the forefront of their campaigns and giving voice to their stories. This is why your 'To Be a Girl' campaign is so compelling and has resonated so strongly in the UK.

It tells the real-life story of girls, like Solo, who have to drop out of school to collect water which is so dirty it is likely to make them sick.

Although Solo's reality is so different from ours - these stories help us to see that she is like any other little girl, wanting to play with friends and go to school. These girls have the same hopes for themselves and their families as our children. They want to be healthy, to get an education and to be able to achieve their full potential.

The reality of the way they are forced to live is so shocking and unacceptable that we are compelled to act.

The many thousands who put their names to the Everyone, Everywhere petition. The thousands who gave to the 'To Be

a Girl' campaign. All of you in this room. We are compelled to find ways to ensure girls like Solo – and countless others – don't have to live this reality.

WaterAid used the power of story-telling to bring these girls' stories to life. At Unilever we also want to tell people's stories and in doing so inspire our employees and their friends and families to join our social mission. That's why we started our Global Ambassador's competition to select employees each year to visit our partnership programmes in-country.

The trips are often described as 'life-changing' and the incredibly powerful stories they bring back help to galvanise employee action and drive a movement for change within the company.

For example, Maria-Andrea who just returned from a project we run with WFP in Kenya – helping smallholder farmers to produce quality crops for local schools – called on others to sign the Zero Hunger pledge.

Or Aytek Koyun who visited a sanitation programme we are doing with Unicef in Vietnam asked people to share the video of his trip on social media to raise awareness of the sanitation crisis.

We must continue to reach people in this way by:

- **using social media, film, mobile and even humour to break down taboos;**
- **sharing best practice, co-creating solutions and starting a global conversation around WASH.**

Closing

Every individual can make a difference by

- **sharing a story;**
- **signing a petition;**
- **raising their voice and rolling up their sleeves to ensure we achieve the ambition of a world where no-one is left behind.**

**We all have a responsibility to act – and in doing so –
empower the actions of others.**

Momentum is building. We see it everywhere:

In Jan Eliasson’s End Open Defecation campaign;

**Amongst the thousands who gathered in Central Park last
week to hear the Global Citizen Festival’s call to action on
sanitation.**

**Even in India – where the problems of WASH seemed so
intractable and complex - Prime Minister Modi is galvanizing
others to join his ‘Clean India’ plan.**

**On launching the plan, Modi got 9 eminent personalities -
cricket icons, film stars, congressmen, business leaders - to
join him in committing to action and to nominate nine others,
and so on and so on, starting a chain of engagement – a
wave of popular support to help wash clean the country!**

**We too must be catalysts for change within our own
networks. We must all speak out, take action and join**

together to ensure that we deliver a world where everyone, everywhere has access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

I know that WaterAid will continue to be at the forefront of this movement and I once more applaud you for this.

I look forward to working with you all to make this ambition a reality. You can count on mine and Unilever's full support.

As Ghandi said “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”.