

Moscow and Bologna, April 28, 2003

Dear President, dear Mayor

In spite of numerous declarations and stated positive intentions, the current gap between the urgent need to provide universal access to water and sanitation and the inadequate effort of the international community to meet it is widening. Today, nearly five million people – mainly children – are dying every year because 1.2 billion human beings have no access to safe drinking water and 2.4 billion people have no access to basic sanitation services. In order to cope with this unacceptable situation, UN Millennium and Johannesburg Declarations set the goal to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

In March 2003, the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto addressed these issues. Although we were disappointed by the lack of commitments agreed to by water and environmental ministers who attended the Ministerial Conference, we were nevertheless impressed by the desire of the 12,000 participants to contribute to solving the global water crisis. We came back with the certainty that humanity can overcome this crisis, but that global and local actions should be implemented within the framework of good governance and financially supported by long term and stable commitments.

The report of the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure, chaired by Michel Camdessus, stressed the need to double the financial investment in the water domain in order to reach the Millennium Development and Johannesburg Goals, however modest they may be. It is time to transform good declarations into good actions, and it is at the regional level that the difference could be made. Therefore, we urge you to double, through decentralised cooperation, your region's contribution to water and sanitation projects by 2007.

The commitment of at least 20 regions and Large Cities that we hope to secure before the G8 Summit on June 13, 2003 will not only send a clear and strong signal to the world leaders assembled in Evian, but could lead to a breakthrough in overcoming institutional inertia and political apathy to improve the situation before it is too late.

This proposal is based on the Johannesburg Declaration of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and Mayors of large cities initiated by Green Cross during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the summer of 2002. The Johannesburg Declaration calls upon the world's political, business and civil society leaders to take action to respect the principles, commit the necessary resources and create adequate instruments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This appeal was endorsed by the 3rd World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates last October and is now signed by Mayors of large cities including Lyon, Rome, Durban, Auckland, Ouagadougou, Vienna, London, Johannesburg and Curitiba and the list is growing.

We very much hope that you will join us in leading by example, in both the proposed action and this important appeal, to concretely achieve the Millennium Development and Johannesburg Goals for the future of the planet and of humanity.

Yours sincerely,



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