

**SPEECH BY MR. AMIR A. DOSSAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE BLUE PLANET  
RUN LAUNCH, 1 JUNE 2007**

THANK YOU, HILARY. WELCOME, EVERYONE, TO THE UNITED NATIONS. I'M AMIR DOSSAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PARTNERSHIPS, AND ON BEHALF OF SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON, I THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TODAY TO WITNESS THE HISTORIC START OF THE BLUE PLANET RUN, THE FIRST-EVER AROUND-THE-WORLD RUN, DEDICATED TO RAISING AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR SAFE WATER.

THE CREDO OF THE BLUE PLANET TEAM IS "WATER IS LIFE. PASS IT ON." IT'S TRUE. WATER IS LITERALLY WHAT WE ARE. IT CONNECTS US AS HUMAN BEINGS.

OUR BODIES ARE MOSTLY MADE OF WATER, WE ALL LIVE ON A PLANET THAT IS 70% WATER, AND WE ALL NEED WATER TO SURVIVE. SPEAKING FROM A PLACE, THE U.N., WHERE PEOPLE FROM SO MANY COUNTRIES AND ETHNICITIES LOOK FOR A STARTING POINT FOR MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS, WATER IS THE COMMON DENOMINATOR. WATER IS ONE OF OUR MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS – AND AS YOU MAY BE AWARE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7 AIMS TO HALVE THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION BY 2015. UNICEF, THE UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, AND MANY OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS GOAL.

THEREFORE, IN THE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP, COOPERATION, PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING THAT ARE THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF OUR ORGANIZATION, WE AT THE U.N. APPLAUD THE WORK OF THE BLUE PLANET RUN FOUNDATION AND THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF ITS SPONSOR IN THE 2007 RUN, DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY, FOR OPENING THE EYES AND POCKETBOOKS OF SO MANY PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY AWARE THAT OVER A BILLION OF THEIR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES - ONE IN 5 PEOPLE ON EARTH-LACK DAILY, IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER.

I AM PARTICULARLY DELIGHTED TO SEE SO MANY CHILDREN HERE TODAY AND THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE DOING ON BEHALF OF THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. THIS EVENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE DEDICATION AND HARD WORK OF IGNITION, KAPLOW, GOLAN HARRIS AND UN COLLAGUES INCLUDING THE UN WORKS CAMPAING, THE SPECIAL EVENTS AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND OF COURSE OUR OWN WILL KEENEDY.

WITH HELP FROM YOU - RESPONSIBLE PRIVATE AND CORPORATE CITIZENS, THE MEDIA, GOVERNMENTS AND NGOs, MORE THAN 2.2 MILLION DEATHS A YEAR CAUSED BY WATERBORNE ILLNESSES - MOST OF THEM CHILDREN - CAN BE ERADICATED IN THE COMING DECADES.

WE ARE NOT WAITING FOR A CURE. THE SOLUTIONS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO US. THEY ARE LOW-COST, EASY TO IMPLEMENT, AND THEY ARE SUSTAINABLE.

THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS JUST NEEDED ONE PERSON TO STAND UP AND SAY, "OVER A BILLION PEOPLE NOT HAVING SAFE WATER TO DRINK IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE! WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! WHAT ABOUT AN AROUND-THE-WORLD RUN?"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS MY PLEASURE AND PRIVILEGE TO PRESENT TO YOU THE PERSON WHOM, FIVE YEARS AGO, HAD THAT VISION AND DID WHAT IT TOOK TO MAKE THE 2007 BLUE PLANET RUN HAPPEN, JIN ZIDELL.