

G8 leaders urged to address global water crisis

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ROME — Advocacy groups such as Greenpeace, Water Aid and End Water Poverty issued a call to leaders of the G8 nations prior to the start of their 2009 summit in Italy to tackle global water and sanitation issues, especially those in developing countries.

The **2009 G8 Summit** is set to be held in L'Aquila, Italy, on July 8-10. Italy now holds the G8 Presidency. The G8 are highly industrialized nations in the northern hemisphere — France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, the United States, Canada and Russia, plus the European Union government, represented by the presidents of the European Council and European Commission — which hold a yearly meeting, the G8 Summit, to discuss global issues.

End Water Poverty reported in a July 6 press release that the advocacy coalition “has issued a stark warning to G8 leaders that failing to meet last year’s promises to tackle the global water and sanitation crisis will undermine any other development initiatives made this week.”

WaterAid’s Oliver Cumming is quoted saying, “Water and sanitation underpin all development efforts. Without access to safe water and sanitation, other decisions that the G8 make will be severely threatened.”

G8 leaders are to address the global food crisis, health and education during the summit.

Water Aid used an offbeat approach to deliver its message to G8 leaders: A 26-year-old Severn Trent Water employee teamed with Water Aid to promote sanitation around the world as part of British sculptor Antony Gormley’s One and Other project in London’s Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. The employee, Oliver Parsons-Baker, dressed up in a costume designed to look like a piece of feces, and held a Water Aid sign that read, “2.5 billion people don’t have a toilet.” Another placard read: “G8 leaders — take action on the sanitation crisis now,” *The London Paper* **reported** on July 7.

Greenpeace noted in a July 7 **Web release** that its activists have been beaming a message to the Kremlin and floating a life-sized iceberg past the Eiffel tower “to call for urgent action from world leaders to save the climate.”

According to Greenpeace, developed countries must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions “to avoid catastrophic climate change” that will lead to “mass migration, mass extinctions and mass starvation.”