



## PRESS INFORMATION

Michael McWilliams, SIWI  
Phone: +46 (0)8 522 139 89  
[michael.mcwilliams@siwi.org](mailto:michael.mcwilliams@siwi.org)

Press kit: [www.worldwaterweek.org/media](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/media)

# Experts at World Water Week assert that sanitation is humanity's most urgent, yet solvable crisis

## *Indian sanitation innovator and social reformer receives Stockholm Water Prize*

Stockholm, Sweden, August 20, 2009 – Inadequate sanitation and its devastating effects on the world's poor comprise humanity's most urgent, yet solvable crisis, according to international leaders and experts convening at the 2009 World Water Week in Stockholm.

"The correlation between sanitation and disease is dramatic and unmistakable," said Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). "Yet, at the current rate of progress, we are going to miss the Millennium Development Goal for sanitation by more than 700 million people, leaving still 2.4 billion people without adequate sanitation by 2015, about the same number as today. By any standard, this is unacceptable. We need the political will to translate our intentions into meaningful action."

In seminars, workshops, and side events during the week, participants have explored the causes, health impacts and possible solutions to inadequate sanitation that currently affects more than 2.6 billion people across the planet, kills over 5000 children daily, and causes the illnesses that fill half of the hospital beds in the developing world. The topics include manual scavenging, sanitation for the urban poor, financing of sanitation, and the effects that climate change could have on sanitation, among many other subjects.

"The sanitation problem has a complex solution," said Jon Lane, Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). "If it was easy it would have been done by now. It needs a systemic intervention. This involves politicians, educationalists, marketers, entrepreneurs, technologists, financiers and philanthropists. Each has a particular role to play."

Tonight's Award Ceremony and Royal Banquet for the 2009 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, highlighted the urgency and international importance of the sanitation challenge. The founder of Sulabh Sanitation Movement in India, Dr. Pathak is known around the world for his wide-ranging work in the sanitation field to improve public health, advance social progress, and improve human rights in his home nation and other countries. His accomplishments span the fields of sanitation technology, social enterprise, and healthcare education for millions of people, serving as a model for NGO agencies and public health initiatives around the world.

"If water is honoured by the Prize being named after it, the importance of sanitation, its sibling, cannot be left far behind," Dr. Pathak said in his acceptance speech. "The two complement rather than compete with each other. Provision of sanitation provides dignity and safety, especially to women, and reduction of child mortality. As a matter of fact, safe water and sanitation go hand in hand for improvement of community health."

Dr. Pathak received the award tonight from H.R.H. Prince Carl Philip of Sweden.



# WORLD WATER WEEK

in Stockholm,  
August 16–22, 2009

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### About the Stockholm Water Prize

First presented in 1991, The Stockholm Water Prize is the world's most prestigious prize for outstanding achievement in water-related activities. The annual prize, which includes a USD 150,000 award and a crystal sculpture, honours individuals, institutions or organisations whose work contributes broadly to the conservation and protection of water resources and to improved health of the planet's inhabitants and ecosystems.

An international nominating committee appointed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences is responsible to review the nominations and propose a candidate. The Founders of the prize are Swedish and international companies in co-operation with the City of Stockholm. The prize program is administered by the Stockholm International Water Institute.

The patron of the Stockholm Water Prize is H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

### About The World Water Week in Stockholm

Organised and directed by [the Stockholm International Water Institute](http://www.siw.org) (SIWI), The World Water Week in Stockholm is the premier meeting place for exchanging water-related views, knowledge, and experience between scientific, business, policy and civic sectors from around the globe. By harnessing and linking best practices, scientific understanding, policy insight and decision-making, the program aims to transcend rhetoric and provide real answers to the global water crisis.

The full World Water Week press kit, including thematic story development resources and expert commentators, is available at [www.worldwaterweek.org/media](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/media).

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### SIWI – Independent and Leading-Edge Water Competence for Future-Oriented Action

*The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to find solutions to the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI advocates future-oriented, knowledge-integrated water views in decision making, nationally and internationally, that lead to sustainable use of the world's water resources and sustainable development of societies.*