

World Vision's Rich Stearns: The Biggest Step We Can Take to End Extreme World Poverty

In the first step of a bold vision to bring clean water to everyone, everywhere World Vision works by the year 2030, President Rich Stearns announced today that the organization will fulfill this commitment first in Rwanda—within five years. The country was chosen because of World Vision's strong presence there, a clear plan of action, and the support of many partners including the local government.

"Solving the global water crisis is perhaps the biggest step we can take toward ending extreme poverty, and we'll get the job done first in Rwanda," said Stearns. "Finishing the job in Rwanda will be a resounding declaration of what can be done when compassionate people are united together to show God's love to those who are suffering."

This task will mean bringing clean water to one million people over a five-year period. It's part of World Vision's ambitious timeline to reach 20 million people with clean water between 2016 and 2020. So far, the organization is on track, having reached nearly eight million people with clean water in the first two years of the commitments.

"While we are making tremendous progress toward our goals, we need to have a sense of urgency in solving this crisis. We know clean water saves the lives of children and transforms communities to achieve their God-given potential. Reaching one million people in Rwanda is well within our grasp. Let's show the world that we can solve the global water crisis starting in Rwanda," said Dr. Greg Allgood, vice president of water for World Vision U.S.

The announcement comes on the 25th anniversary of World Water

Day. Stearns is currently traveling in Rwanda, meeting families in communities who don't yet have access to clean water as well as those whose lives are now forever changed because World Vision has brought access to clean water to their communities.

The need is urgent:

- Nearly 1,000 children under age 5 die every day from diarrhea caused by contaminated water, poor sanitation and improper hygiene.
- Women and children are responsible for water collection in more than 80 percent of households in 61 developing countries; often, the walk is dangerous, children miss school and the water is unhealthy.
- Globally, 844 million people lack access to clean water and in Rwanda alone, 47 percent of the rural population is without clean water.

The progress is encouraging. In the past 25 years since World Water Day began:

- Two billion people have been reached with clean water worldwide.
- In the early 1990s, World Vision was reaching an estimated 200,000 people per year in just a select number of countries including Ghana, Mali and Niger. Today, the organization reaches an estimated 3.2 million people a year with clean water. That means reaching one new person with clean water every 10 seconds and reaching three more schools every day with clean water.
- World access to improved water sources has gone from 76 percent in the 1990s to 89 percent of the global population today who have basic water service, meaning access within a 30-minute round trip ().

“Supporting the Rwandan government's ambitious goal of 100 percent water coverage by 2024, we'll demonstrate global

leadership by finishing the job, paving the way to do the same in other countries like Ghana, Honduras and Zambia. Rwanda's leaders have made a bold commitment to turn their legacy from one of horrific genocide to hope and health. We are excited to come alongside them in this effort," Stearns said.

Anyone can join with World Vision in the effort to bring water to those in need. One way is by joining World Vision's Global 6K for Water. On Saturday, May 19, 2018, people from around the globe will walk or run 6 kilometers for an extraordinary cause, uniting in the world's biggest 6K for water. Every \$50 registration fee will provide life-changing clean water to one person. Register or learn more today by visiting .