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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO THE SECOND MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD
ON WATER AND SANITATION
Tokyo, 9 December 2004**

*Delivered by Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General
for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs*

It gives me pleasure to send my greetings to the second meeting of the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. I would like to thank the Board's members for their commitment and continued support. I would also like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, who has served so capably as Chair of the Board, and to the Government of Japan, for hosting this meeting.

You gather now to build on the important steps taken at your first meeting in July. I look forward in particular to the recommendations you will make for speeding up efforts to reach the internationally agreed goals on safe drinking water, sanitation and integrated water resources management. Indeed, like you, I am concerned at the slow and uneven progress to date. Many countries have not yet embarked on the preparation of IWRM plans. We need to better understand the obstacles we face, and to explore more creatively options for scaling up best practices and models. This will be the main thrust of discussion at next April's session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and I would like you to share your ideas and vision with the Member States.

Providing water services to all, especially the poor, is vital for the success of our fight against poverty, hunger and disease. It is not too late to prevent serious water shortages in the decades ahead, but any further delays carry great risk. We need to move fast in devising better water management strategies that promote both equitable access and adequate supplies. I wish you all success in your important deliberations.