# NEWS RELEASE

**Rotary rallies the world for safe water and improved sanitation**

*Update on the water crisis in São Paulo*

**São Paulo (3 June 2015)** – With the five reservoirs in the Cantareira system at dangerously low capacity, São Paulo is suffering its worst drought in eight decades. Members of the humanitarian service organization, Rotary are collaborating with other groups to help provide safe water and sanitation to communities wherever there is need at its seventh annual World Water Summit.

Rotary’s Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group is hosting its seventh annual **World Water Summit in São Paulo – 4 June, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Renaissance São Paulo Hotel, Al. Santos, 2233, São Paulo.** This year’s summit will feature Carlos Rossin, Director of Sustainability Solutions, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Gustavo Melo, Marketing Coordinator of Latin America for Greif who will provide an update on São Paulo’s Water crisis and a special video appearance by [Raya](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/our-blog/2014/03/19/cleaner-healthier-happier/), a Sesame Street Workshop muppet, as she discusses her work teaching children good hygiene habits. Sesame Street introduced Raya last year with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to teach the more than 40 million children who watch the show in Bangladesh, India, and Nigeria about sanitation and hygiene.

The World Water Summit will showcase the latest advances in water and sanitation technology and highlight how Rotary members are helping communities around the world develop and maintain sustainable water and sanitation systems. For more information on the summit, visit: [www.wasrag.org](http://www.wasrag.org/).

The goal of the summit is to match industry expert knowledge with Rotary-led water and sanitation projects. “Water-related health concerns cause more deaths and suffering than most other health concerns combined,” said Steve Werner, co-chair, World Water Summit. “Over 6000 deaths occur every day around the world from water-related preventable illnesses. These illnesses also contribute to lost productivity, and when women and children have to fetch water – mostly from polluted sources – they also lose time from more productive activities such as generating income and going to school.”

A centerpiece of Rotary’s emphasis on water and sanitation issues is the [International H2O Collaboration](https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/get-involved/take-action/rotary-usaid-international-h2o-collaboration), an alliance between Rotary International and USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development). Launched in 2009, it works to implement long-term, sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene projects in the developing world. The first phase of the partnership focused on three countries: Ghana, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic.

In 2011, Rotary, through its foundation, established a strategic partnership with [UNESCO-IHE](http://www.unesco-ihe.org/) a United Nations institute in The Netherlands that is the world’s largest postgraduate water education facility. The Rotary Foundation provides grants to Rotary clubs and districts to select and sponsor eight students each year for scholarships leading to master’s degrees in specified program areas.

**About Rotary**

[Rotary](http://www.rotary.org/) brings together a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. To access broadcast quality video footage and still photos go to: [The Newsmarket](http://www.thenewsmarket.com/rotaryinternational).

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