

# WORLD TOILET DAY 2015

## BACKGROUND

The 2015 World Toilet Day (WTD) at the United Nations (UN) is an initiative of the Singapore Government and a Singapore NGO, the World Toilet Organisation. **November 19 was designated WTD in 2013 through a UN General Assembly resolution, unanimously adopted by all 193 Member States of the UN.** Sponsored by 122 countries, the resolution requested UN-Water, in consultation with relevant entities of the UN system and in collaboration with Governments and relevant stakeholders, to facilitate the implementation of WTD. **Since then, WTD has provided an annual opportunity to make sanitation for all a global development priority and urge changes in both behaviour and policy on issues ranging from improving water management to ending open defecation.** As a UN commemorative day, WTD will be observed at the international, regional, national and local levels by UN Member States, UN agencies, and civil society organisations. In this regard, the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the UN in partnership with UN-Water (co-ordinated through UNICEF and UNSGAB) will organise the third WTD event at the UN on 19 November 2015, together with fellow UN Member States, other UN agencies, civil society organisations and the private sector. The WTD event this year is also convened as part of a series of events to commemorate UN High-Level Water and Sanitation Days, which includes the UNSGAB Final Ceremony and the 2nd UN Special Session on Water and Disasters.

## 2015 WORLD TOILET DAY

**The theme for the 2015 World Toilet Day event is “Toilets and Health: better sanitation for better nutrition” which draws attention to the need for better sanitation to improve nutrition and health for everyone, everywhere.**

Although significant progress was made during the Millennium Development Goal era to improve access to safe toilets and to end open defecation, the sanitation target was missed by almost 700 million people. Currently, there are still 2.4 billion people who do not use even basic toilets. Lack of access to clean drinking water, sanitation, and the absence of good hygiene practices, are

among the underlying causes of undernutrition. Around 45% of all child deaths are related to malnutrition. 25% of all children under five are stunted, which impacts on both their physical and cognitive development. Around 20% of all maternal deaths are related to stunting and anaemia. Combining interventions that improve sanitation and hygiene with appropriate infant and young child feeding practices contributes to positive nutrition outcomes. Hence, in addressing the sanitation crisis, we can improve health, dignity, safety, survival, and livelihoods – building blocks for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## PUBLICATION LAUNCH

At the WTD event this year, UNICEF, WHO, and USAID will launch a new publication – “Improving nutrition outcomes with better water, sanitation, and hygiene: Practical solutions for policy and programmes”. The publication summarises the evidence that demonstrates how access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) has

a positive impact on nutrition; describes the gains from integrating nutrition and WASH actions; and outlines how and where integration adds value. Case studies illustrate integration lessons learned from across the globe. Significantly, the publication offers nutrition and WASH implementers practical suggestions for tangibly addressing WASH in both national nutrition policies and programmes to help achieve global WASH and nutrition targets and to reach the new SDGs to improve child and maternal health.

## WORLD TOILET DAY EVENT

The event consists of a lunch-time panel discussion where participants will consider how better sanitation supports better nutrition and improved health, especially for women and children. **It will be**

**held on 19 November from 1.15 to 2.45pm in the ECOSOC Chamber, Conference Building, UNHQ, New York.** There will be a brief opening session followed by an interactive panel discussion. The objective of the event and the launch of the joint publication is to raise the profile of basic sanitation and its importance for achieving better nutrition outcomes.

## FAST FACTS

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