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Temasek JC students prepares for the Sparkling Toilet Race



"So many things, so little time"



"Someone got to test it out, dude!"



My favourite spot in the toilet"



"This is the cleanest male toilet"



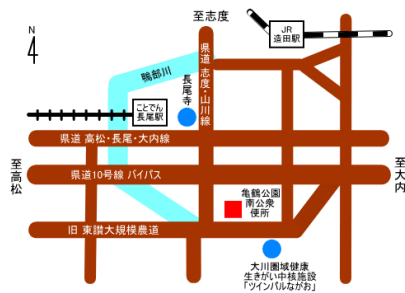
"Out guys! It's the ladies"



"If we can't find it, how can the...."

News Bite

Grateful cabbies receive toilet maps (China Daily)



Maps showing the distribution of public toilets have been created in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province.

The maps will help many in the tourist city, but perhaps taxi drivers most of all, who spend all day on the road and often cannot locate facilities when most needed.

The maps, detailing all of the public toilets in the city, were given to taxi drivers for free and were warmly welcomed by those always behind the wheel, reports the Suzhou Daily.

Japanese women make toilet tracks a sound business

Walk in, close the door, feel the warmth of the seat and pause until music starts to play. Or, if you'd prefer, tune in the amplified gurgle of a babbling brook.

No, it's not a night at a Tokyo music festival. It's Muzak broadcast to the smallest possible audience. And it comes from a small digital speaker not too far from the toilet roll holder.

If cultures are defined by their daily rituals, then Japan's toilets are worth a look. Not all of them, just the women's.



It is there that the Sound Princess has found its place. When it is playing, no other noise can be heard. It has meant that in her most private of moments a Japanese woman is both relieved and grateful. "Japanese women are very embarrassed by the sounds they make in a toilet," said the spokeswoman for the company that dreamed up the gadget, Toto.

It might seem like a cruel thing to trade on hang-ups and insecurities, but the fact is that Toto has sold more than 500,000 of the devices since 1998 and experienced a 125 per cent increase in demand last year.

Often cast in powder pink plastic and devilishly easy to set off, the Princess can give you quite a start the first time it bursts forth. But it has become such a part of the public bathroom soundscape that it is virtually impossible to pick a real flush

from a digitally recorded babbling brook. In a queue, there is no telling which cubicle is going to be the first one free.

In gadget-mad Japan it may be possible to explain it away as crazy gimmickry, but there is more to it than that. In places that are not yet wired for sound it is very common to see women walk into the cubicle and immediately start flushing and not stop.

In a survey of female students done by Fukuoka University, 90 per cent said they flushed twice when they went to the toilet, and 6 per cent said they flushed three times.

Only 4 per cent said they flushed only once. The men, apparently, did not care. With each flush sending more than a dozen litres down the drain it was the waste of water and the huge size of the bills that got the inventors at Toto interested. Even in earlier models there is a light display to tell you when the sound effects are finishing up.

If you're not quite done then, all you do is wave your hand in front of the sensor, for another 30 seconds of instant orchestral camouflage.

Yes, it can make the most basic of needs a task of timing and co-ordination that is worthy of a choreographer, but it was music to the ears of the bean counters at Matsushita Electric Industrial. They installed the Princess in the company's nationwide network of offices and found they saved \$A760,000 on the annual water bill.

The Silent Emergency

Lack of water and sanitation causes silent emergency

WHO/UNICEF report warns that vicious cycle of ill-health and poverty could defeat human development efforts, with children first to suffer



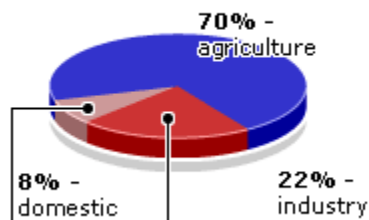
NEW YORK/GENEVA, 26 August 2004 - More than 2.6 billion people – over 40 per cent of the world's population – do not have basic sanitation, and more than one billion people still use unsafe sources of drinking water, warns a major report released today by WHO (the World Health Organization) and UNICEF.

Entitled Meeting the Millennium Development Goals drinking water and sanitation target - A mid-term assessment of progress, the report details the progress of individual countries, regions, and the world as a whole between the MDG baseline year of 1990 and the half-way mark of 2002. It makes two significant predictions on reaching the 2015 goals*, based on progress to date:

The global sanitation target will be missed by a staggering half a billion people – most of them in rural Africa and Asia – allowing waste and disease to spread, killing millions of children and leaving millions more on the brink of survival. The world is on track to meet the drinking water target, but population growth may outstrip improvements, with 800 million people still drinking unsafe water by 2015.

This severe human and economic toll could be prevented by closing the gap between urban and rural populations and by providing simple hygiene education, say UNICEF and WHO.

Global water use



The agencies warned that a global trend towards urbanization is marginalising the rural poor and putting huge strain on basic services in cities. As a result, families living in rural villages and urban slums are being trapped in a cycle of ill-health and poverty. Children are always the first to suffer from the burden of disease caused by dirty water and poor hygiene, while the wider impact of unhygienic environments drags back economic progress and

erodes good governance.

“Around the world millions of children are being born into a silent emergency of simple needs,” says Carol Bellamy, UNICEF’s Executive Director. “The growing disparity between the haves and the have nots in terms of access to basic services is killing around 4000 children every day and underlies many more of the 10 million child deaths each year. We have to act now to close this gap or the death toll will certainly rise.”

- **People in the rich world will not save water until they realise that water is an expensive commodity.** ”

Sandip Savasadia, Karlskrona, Sweden

"Water and sanitation are among the most important determinants of public health. They are amongst the top of WHO's list of components of primary health care. Wherever people achieve reliable access to safe drinking-water and adequate sanitation they have won a major battle against a wide range of diseases." says WHO Director-General Dr LEE Jong-wook.



Developing regions of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, are most at risk. But the report also highlights some worrying trends in the industrialised regions**, where coverage figures for clean water and basic sanitation facilities are estimated to have decreased by 2 per cent between 1990 and 2002. In the former Soviet Union, only 83 per cent had access to adequate sanitation facilities. With economic and population pressures growing, these percentages could decrease.

The consequences of inaction today are severe, according to WHO and UNICEF. Diarrhoeal disease currently takes the lives of 1.8 million people each year – most of them children under five - with millions more left permanently debilitated. Over 40 billion work hours are lost in Africa to the need to fetch drinking water. And many children, particularly girls, are prevented from going to school for want of latrines, squandering their intellectual and economic potential.

- **And water-borne diseases already kill one child every eight seconds, as day follows day. ”**

Reversing this trend and moving towards universal coverage for water and sanitation will take more than money, said Bellamy and Lee. National policies based on the principle of “some for all” rather than “all for some” have been the key to improvements in many countries. And at the local level, resources have to be retargeted to include the poorest communities, with local government and the private sector co-operating to bring affordable solutions.

“To meet the 2015 targets, countries need to create the political will and resources to serve a billion new urban dwellers, and reduce by almost 1 billion the number of rural dwellers without access to adequate sanitation facilities – otherwise we risk leaving millions, if not billions, out of the development process,” says Dr Lee.



WHO and UNICEF say the report, which is the first in a series looking at progress in water and sanitation coverage, should be a wake up call to all global leaders. Every country still has work to do to eliminate disparities in basic services and the data shows clearly how that can be done before the MGD deadline of 2015.

There are also very encouraging signs. Great gains in water and sanitation coverage have been made against considerable odds in many countries. This progress came as a direct result of political prioritisation and a drive to find locally effective solutions.

“This report is important because it proves that significant improvements are possible in a short space of time, even in the poorest countries.” says Ms Bellamy. “By identifying trends now, and committing to course corrections, we have a real opportunity to ensure that by 2015 these basic essentials of life are available to all.”

Notes:

*Eight Millennium Development Goals were agreed by the Member States of the United Nations at the Millennium Summit in 2000. The targets state that the proportion of people worldwide not having access to an improved water source,

and the proportion of people worldwide not having access to adequate sanitation facilities, should be halved between the baseline year of 1990 and 2015.

**See Annex for the MDG regions and the countries they include.

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17 November to 19 November 2004 - World Toilet Summit 2004

THE WORLD OF TOILETS CONGREGATE IN BEIJING, CHINA



The World Toilet Summit will be held in Beijing, China from 17th Nov. to 19th Nov. 2004. The theme of this Summit is: Human, Environment & Living. Centered on this theme, workshops will be organized on such hot topics as: humanized toilet, the popularization of the environmental toilet, toilet management and hygiene, toilet designing and energy-saving measures and so on.

Visitors will be arranged to see the achievements of the toilet constructions in Beijing in recent years. We warmly welcome the participation of organizations, groups, individuals from various countries and regions of the world, who are dedicated themselves to the development of the world toilets. And discuss the trend of the world toilet development and show to the world the latest toilet technology. ”