

## S'pore may have most modern sanitation, but toilets not clean enough

By S Ramesh, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 02 December 2009 1728 hrs

SINGAPORE : Singapore may have the most modern sanitation system, but its public toilets are not clean enough, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Lim Swee Say.

He called on Singaporeans to get their act together to make the toilets among the cleanest in the world.

Mr Lim was speaking at the World Toilet Summit and Expo on Wednesday. The summit is back in Singapore for the second time in nine years.

Providing countries with basic toilet solutions is big business amounting to US\$1 trillion, said participants at the World Toilet Summit.

But industry players said more needs to be done to reach out to the nearly 2.5 billion people who still do not have access to modern sanitation.

Dr Ke Seetharaman, director, Institute of Water Policy, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, said: "Unlike water which is needed for basic living and survival - people demand that - but in the case of sanitation, people just go and defecate in the open, they do not demand it from their policy makers to give them good sanitation."

So what is needed immediately is - sanitation facilities for 500 million households.

Mr Lim said: "This global sanitation challenge can only be overcome if the global community learns to put every dollar, every idea and every drop of water to good use. It will take a long time but it can be done if there is enough attention, effort and determination put into this.

"Here in Singapore, in the area of water management and sanitation development, we did put every dollar, every idea and every drop of water to good use over the years. Today, we are proud to have one of the most modern sanitation in the world, with 100 per cent coverage of households and public places."

But Singapore faces a different challenge.

Jack Sim, founder, World Toilet Organisation, said: "People have been asking me how come Singapore can host Formula One but can't keep the coffee shop toilet clean. Once we have the focus on enforcement and encouragement and whatever policy that is needed, it will happen."

The World Toilet Summit and Expo is not just about the challenges that are being faced by the sanitation industry in countries. It is also about a clean environment and keeping cities clean.

That is where the whole range of cleaning industry products at the expo provides business opportunities for this sector - especially when the industry is a growing S\$600 million sector - through best practices and automation. - CNA/ms



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