

Singapore may have the best sanitation but its toilets are not clean enough: Swee Say

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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.

S Ramesh with the story.

Providing countries with basic toilet solutions is big business amounting to one trillion US Dollars say participants at the World Toilet Summit.

The summit is back in Singapore for the second time in nine years.

But industry players say more needs to be done to reach out to the nearly 2.5 billion people who still don't have access to modern sanitation.

Dr KE Seetharaman is Director of the Institute of Water Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

"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 don't demand it from their policy makers to give them good sanitation."

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

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Lim Swee Say.

"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, efforts 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 one hundred per cent coverage of households and public places."

But Jack Sim, the founder of the World Toilet Organisation, says Singapore faces a different challenge.

"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. It is not rocket science, it is just a neglect that we have to switch focus and a culture where people enjoy going to the toilet and the toilet respect them, they will respect the toilet."

The World Toilet Summit and Expo's not just about the challenges that are being faced by the sanitation industry in countries.

It's also about a clean environment and keeping cities clean.

That's where the whole range of cleaning industry products at this expo provide business opportunities for this sector. Especially when the industry's a growing \$600 million dollar sector through best practices and automation.