



**LOO DOS AND DON'TS:** Cut out bad toilet behaviour like wasting toilet paper, exhort mime artists from Mime Unlimited, who gave the audience a lesson in good and bad toilet habits at the pre-launch conference yesterday.

# World Toilet Organisation

to flush out issues to keep loos nice and clean

*Who says toilets are not taken seriously? SHARMILPAL KAUR looks at how a group of world toilet bodies will set up a WTO of their own, and will be having their own summit next year*

A NEW WTO will be set up next year, but it will have nothing to do with world trade.

Instead, the World Toilet Organisation will be the seat of power, as it were, for matters relating to keeping loos nice and clean.

The organisation is being set up jointly by the Japan Toilet Association and Restroom Association Singapore. The secretariat will be based in Singapore.

It will pool information on the latest technological breakthroughs in building and maintaining toilets, as well as on all toilet issues, and then disseminate information to members throughout the world.

This was announced by Mr Jack Sim, president of Restroom Association Singapore, a society which wants to promote greater awareness of toilet issues.

He was speaking at a pre-launch of the World Toilet Summit 2001 and the Restroom Asia 2001 exhibition at the Pan Pacific Hotel yes-

terday, which was also attended by foreign media like the New York Times, CNBC and Japanese newspapers.

Said Mr Sim, who will also chair the summit: "We must feel able to talk about toilets the same way we talk about food and health. There is a need to educate the public on the problems and solutions of toilet issues."

"This can be done through continuous transparent discussions."

These discussions will range from basic maintenance and building issues to finding ways of saving water through harnessing technology.

"If we continue to flush precious water, we will not have enough to drink, so we have to find new methods and new systems of waste disposal," said Mr Sim.

"We believe that working through the World Toilet Organisation will not only improve the toilet environment, but also bring together the world community to cooperate in a common goal..."

Local non-governmental green organisations also attended yesterday's pre-launch. The two events will be held concurrently next November.

The World Toilet Summit evolved from the annually-held Asia-Pacific Toilet Association, which has been organised by the Japan Toilet Organisation since 1985.

The summit is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Japan Toilet Association, the Korea Clean Toilet Association and India's Sulabh International.

At least 500 delegates from government bodies and the business sector, and experts in the field are expected at the summit.

It will be held once every two years, and will be rotated among member countries.

Restroom Asia 2001 is an international trade fair for sanitary ware, restroom technology and fittings. Over 150 exhibitors from 15 countries are expected to participate.

Said Mr Sim: "The exhibition promises to be a one-stop information and sourcing centre for the latest... restroom products, equipment and services."

## Why China lost out

IS IT that important to have clean toilets?

Well, one of the reasons cited for China failing in its bid to host the Sydney Olympics was its dirty toilets as well as its lack of such conveniences.

The state of toilets in China was deemed unfit for

the thousands of athletes and spectators.

Some people who need to go urgently have been known to hold on just so they can be spared entering a dirty, smelly loo.

But this can lead to bladder inflammations and urinary incontinence, said Mr

Jack Sim, chairman of the World Toilet Summit 2001.

To avoid having to use public toilets that are dirty, older people would rather drink less water to reduce the need to urinate.

This could lead to dehydration, warned Mr Sim.

## Cleaning industry worth \$300m

THE cleaning industry here is worth big bucks — over \$300 million annually and is expected to grow by 27 per cent over the next five years.

And toilet-cleaning accounts for a big chunk of it. Cleaning does not come cheap.

For example, keeping Changi Airport clean costs \$15 million each year.

ISS-International Service System, the market leader here which is based in Copenhagen, had a group turnover of about \$4.5 billion last year.

In Singapore, it has a staff strength of 3,500 and had a turnover of about \$64 million last year, with over 85 per cent of its revenue coming from cleaning services.

Campaign Services, one of the top local companies, has 1,200 cleaners, of whom 30 to 40 per cent are toilet cleaners.

Established in 1986, its clients include Changi Airport and Suntec City.

On the general cost of cleaning a toilet, Campaign's managing director

Eddie Loh said: "This is based on the number of people deployed, the area to be cleaned, the specifications, toiletries supplied, whether the work is for three shifts."

"On average, it costs about \$800 to \$1,100 a month to clean a toilet daily."

"It depends on the supply of toiletries, air fresheners, and the quality of toilet paper."

"This is for toilets with an average of three or four cubicles."