

**World Toilet Summit & Expo 2008 promotes sustainable sanitation in support of the International Year of Sanitation**

*Launch of new funding platform for global sanitation projects – World Sanitation Fund Forum*

**9 November 2007, Singapore** – Driving progress to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on Sanitation, the 2008 edition of the World Toilet Summit & Expo (WTSE) will be held at The Venetian Macao-Resort-Hotel, from 4 to 6 November. The event is expected to attract high-level officials from the public and private sectors.

Jointly organised by the World Toilet Organization (WTO) and MP Asia (MPA), WTSE is an ACTION-oriented platform that aims to induce collaborations from private, public and humanitarian organisations to combat sanitation challenges of the world in a common arena.

A significant issue which will be addressed is the lack of funding for sanitation projects worldwide. One of the biggest problems often faced by countries with poor sanitation facilities is insufficient funds for new developments. Hence, WTO will be launching the World Sanitation Fund Forum (WSFF) to specifically address this issue.

**ASHOKA Innovators of the Public**, a global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs, is working with WTO and other social entrepreneurs in creating innovative financing solutions in the field of sanitation. WSFF will be THE platform to provide funding and matching opportunities for donors and recipient groups.

Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-At-Large, Singapore, and Chairman, Governing Council, Asia-Pacific Water Forum, commented, "The world will not be able to meet the MDG's target for sanitation without drastic and urgent action. WSFF is an opportunity for the global community to focus on an action-oriented and market-based approach to address the issue. I applaud WTO for its relentless effort to bring together and align all key sanitation actors towards a common mission and for launching the WSFF."

**Helping to solve the sanitation crisis**

Today, 2.6 billion or 40 per cent of the world's population remain without access to proper sanitation. To address this crisis, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2008 the International Year of Sanitation (IYS). This is part of a concerted effort to help solve the sanitation crisis and achieve the MDG on Sanitation - to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

Jack Sim, founder of WTO, said, "Our aim is to transform the community of 2.6 billion toilet-less people into a vibrant sanitation marketplace. We have to see these 2.6 billion people as potential customers for toilets and small sanitation treatment systems.

There are huge opportunities for economies of scale, and we can drive cost down to beyond the manufacturing cost of the products itself. We can do this by bundling micro-loans and mass-produced toilets with on-site treatment to reduce the overheads of selling costs by half. An efficient market will have its own demand and supply mechanism, innovation, competition and financing to serve the unserved gaps.

WTSE and WSFF have received strong branding and recognition from the UN authorities, such as United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and The Pacific (UNESCAP), and other global players, and WTO sees this as an excellent opportunity to engage all players to join in this dynamic marketplace, and improve the current sanitation situation."

WTSE will feature high-level discussions targeted at industry players from all sectors, and cover topics that are relevant to achieving the MDG on Sanitation. One of the topics that will be explored is the paradigm shift required to tap the 'bottom of the pyramid', a term coined by CK Prahalad, author of the insightful book, *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits*.

There is an emerging market with great opportunities that businesses can explore. The business in alleviating poverty will not only improve the bottom-line for commercial organisations but serves an excellent social cause.

Delegates attending WTSE will have the opportunity to discuss pertinent issues, such as micro-financing, policies and standards, and sanitation technology, during the two-day conference.

Kevin Teo, Head, East Asia, **Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship**, said, "The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship is proud to support WTO's initiative to engage private, public and non-governmental organisations to implement practical solutions to address the world's sanitation challenges. Private sector investment and skills will be a crucial element towards achieving sustainable sanitation for those living below the poverty line."

### **Sustainable sanitation showcase**

The World Toilet Expo (WTE) aims to offer viable solutions to improve sanitation both for the urban and rural areas. Visitors can expect an innovative showcase of leading-edge sanitation solutions which include air quality management, cleaning and maintenance, design and systems, facility management, mobile toilets, sanitary ware and fittings, sewerage management, waste and water treatment, and other related services. In addition, through the showcase, it will prompt both suppliers and users to consider more holistic solutions for the 'bottom of the pyramid'.

A unique feature at the Expo is the Marketplace, it is an excellent trading place for active exchanges amongst the private, public and humanitarian sectors to explore new solutions and promote sustainable sanitation.

Sylvia Phua, Chief Executive Officer of MP Asia, said, "This event will be a total experience for practical solutions that encompass all aspects necessary to furthering the toilet cause. The Summit facilitates the transfer of knowledge and serious discussions, sharing of expertise and provides excellent networking opportunities. Participants will also have opportunities to embrace innovative solutions and evaluate the latest products and services through the Expo."

WTSE 2008 will be collocating with ISSA/INTERCLEAN China, giving visitors a more comprehensive platform towards sanitation and cleaning solutions.

This year's World Toilet Summit was held in New Delhi, India, from 31 October to 3 November 2007. It was officiated by Honourable Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Former President of India. Other dignitaries in attendance included Minister of Rural Development, Honourable Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Honourable Smt. Meira Kumar, Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Honourable Kumari Selja and HRH the Prince of Orange of the Netherlands, Chairperson of UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and

Sanitation (UNSCAB). Some 400 health and sanitation experts from over 40 countries attended the four-day event.

The event ended on a high note with attendees affirming their support for the sanitation cause in the Delhi Declaration signed on 2 November 2007. Attendees pledged to "facilitate a paradigm shift from disposal-oriented to reuse and recycling sanitation systems." They also promised to "mobilise governments, UN agencies, financial institutions, corporate bodies, sanitation service providers, local bodies and other stakeholders to accelerate the progress on achieving the MDG on Sanitation by 2015."

Note to Editors: Photographs are available on request.

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#### **About World Toilet Organization**

The World Toilet Organization was founded in 2001. Based in Singapore, it is a non-profit organisation and has 54 members from 35 economies. It is the global voice that advocates sustainable toilet systems through capacity building, public education and implementation of real time projects. It aims to investigate the root causes of dirty toilets and identify key motivations and incentives for good solutions, by assuming the role of a "Change Agent" to bring social change, accelerate the learning curve through knowledge sharing, mobilising resources and coordinating both volunteers and organisations.

#### **About MP Asia**

MP Asia is part of the MP International group of companies which specialises in organising exhibitions, conferences and special events for various industries and interest groups. Established in 1987, the group has organised and managed over 250 national, regional and international events. Leveraging on the international network of its parent company Pico, it has expanded into key Asian cities and the Middle East. It is a founding partner of WEO, a regional network of professional event organisers.

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Issued by World Toilet Organization and MP Asia Pte Ltd

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