

UN's large inflatable toilet marks global crisis

November 19 2014



In this photo provided by the United Nations, a 15-foot-high inflatable toilet stands in front of United Nations headquarters, in observance of "World Toilet Day," Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2014. Far from a laughing matter, the world body is drawing attention to a global sanitation crisis: 2.5 billion people lack basic sanitation services, and 1 billion people, or one in every seven people, still defecate in the open. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement Wednesday that the world has a "moral imperative" to end open defecation so

that women and girls are not at risk of rape because they lack a place to use the toilet. (AP Photo/Mark Garten, United Nations)

Yes, that was a large inflatable toilet standing outside the United Nations headquarters. It's World Toilet Day.

Far from a laughing matter, the world body was seeking to draw attention Wednesday to a global sanitation crisis: 2.5 billion people lack basic sanitation services, and 1 billion people—or one in every seven people—still defecate in the open.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement that the world has a "moral imperative" to end open defecation so that women and girls are not at risk of rape because they lack a private place to use the toilet.

The campaign to end open defecation has been especially high-profile in recent months, with India's prime minister raising the issue at a U.N.-sponsored concert in New York during the annual General Assembly of world leaders in September. The campaign even printed special toilet paper rolls with statistics and placed them in U.N. restrooms during the meeting.

Children drink water every day that is mixed with their neighbors' feces, according to the campaign. A child dies every 2.5 minutes of diarrheal diseases due to water contaminated with feces.

The inflatable [toilet](#), 15 feet (4.5 meters) high, was the latest project. It was taken down Wednesday afternoon because of high winds.

U.N. Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson told reporters Wednesday that sanitation is one area where the world is behind in meeting

ambitious anti-poverty goals adopted by world leaders in 2000 with a deadline of 2015, and that needed to change.



In this photo provided by the United Nations, a small group of UN staff, with a "Toilets Save Lives!" banner, poses for a photo with a 15-foot-high inflatable toilet, in front of United Nations headquarters, in observance of "World Toilet Day," Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2014. Far from a laughing matter, the world body is drawing attention to a global sanitation crisis: 2.5 billion people lack basic sanitation services, and 1 billion people, or one in every seven people, still defecate in the open. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement Wednesday that the world has a "moral imperative" to end open defecation so that women and girls are not at risk of rape because they lack a place to use the toilet. (AP Photo/Mark Garten, United Nations)

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