

WORLD TOILET DAY

MEDIA RELEASE

19 November 2014

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Cities can't wait for sanitation

THE HAGUE - Today is World Toilet Day. On this day, the United Nations along with governments and organisations worldwide ask attention for sanitation and for the 2.5 billion people that still lack access. And on this day, the international think-and-do tank IRC presents its ideas how to 'systemically change sanitation in cities'.

World Toilet Day continues to raise awareness on a global problem. With the end of the Millennium Development Goals around the corner in 2015, still 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities. And as the world urbanises rapidly, the sanitary needs of many living in cities grow extensively.

Today IRC, a non-profit organisation working in water, sanitation and hygiene, launches the working paper "Towards Systemic Change in Urban Sanitation". It marks one of the first steps in finding answers to how to reform the sanitation sector which is failing a large part of the urban population. The problems in urban sanitation range from lack of facilities, a lack of public funding and messy politics in urban governance. Technology alone is not the solution.

IRC argues that sanitation is a public good and is therefore a public responsibility. This does not exempt households from their responsibilities, or exclude private businesses. However, there is a strong need for governmental agencies to lead a reform in urban sanitation. At the same time, IRC proposes a process of change leading to a sector that is self-reliant, trusted by citizens and private parties, and able to respond to current and upcoming challenges.

CEO of IRC, Patrick Moriarty said: "It is great that on this day such an important topic is discussed globally and taken up by media around the world. At IRC, we believe that working toilets and latrines should not be a surprise or cause for celebration. We believe in a world where water, sanitation and hygiene are services that everyone is able to take for granted."

World Toilet Day is a global campaigning day where many organisations in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector collectively call to take action. Jointly they raise awareness on the 2.5 billion people who lack access to sanitation, the 1 billion people who have to defecate in the open and the women and girls who are particularly at risk because of this situation.

IRC's work in urban sanitation

The Urban Sanitation Development Program (USDP) (2010-2014) focuses on 330 cities in Indonesia. IRC provides technical assistance together with Royal Haskoning DHV/MLD and works with Indonesian consultants in providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health on health, gender and poverty aspects of the programme. IRC trainee Giacomo Galli, who visited the programme in August 2014, has written an overview of the programme and a blog about the unsolved problems related to faecal sludge management.

The Pan-Africa programme (2010-2014), managed by Plan with the help of IRC and IDS (UK), promotes and scales up Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in 8 African countries, in both rural and peri-urban areas. The programme is also testing Urban Community-Led Total Sanitation (UCLTS).

For a full overview of what IRC does on sanitation see the topic page: www.ircwash.org/topics/sanitation

Download the Working paper - Towards systemic change in urban sanitation
<http://www.ircwash.org/resources/towards-systemic-change-urban-sanitation>

About IRC

IRC is an international think-and-do tank that works with governments, NGOs, businesses and people around the world to find long-term solutions to the global crisis in water, sanitation and hygiene services. At the heart of its mission is the aim to move from short-term interventions to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services.

With over 45 years of experience, IRC runs programmes and projects in more than 25 countries and large-scale projects in seven focus countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is supported by a team of over 100 staff across the world.

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