Global ‘Urgent Run’ to commemorate UN World Toilet Day

Singapore: World Toilet Organization (WTO) in partnership with Unilever’s leading toilet cleaning brand, Domestos, has launched The Urgent Run, a global mobilisation event to commemorate UN World Toilet Day on 19 November and draw attention to the urgent calls for action to end the sanitation crisis. Sixteen Urgent Run events will be organised in 12 countries in 2014, the first year for this global event. The flagship event will be held in Singapore on 9 November, with others taking place in India, Germany, Italy, the Philippines, Indonesia, Ghana, Senegal, Benin, Gambia, Togo and Mozambique.

The theme of this year’s UN World Toilet Day on 19 November is dignity and equality, with a focus on inspiring action to end open defecation and putting a spotlight on how access to improved sanitation leads to a reduction in assault and violence on women.

“The global sanitation crisis is an urgent matter: 2.5 billion people on this planet still do not have access to safe toilets with adequate sanitation, and 1 billion people still defecate in the open, which spreads diseases and impacts on their safety and dignity,” said Jack Sim, Founder of World Toilet Organization. “As long as toilets and sanitation are considered a taboo subject, many people will be reluctant to address the issue. When you participate in The Urgent Run, you can help to break that taboo and make a difference by creating awareness of the global sanitation challenge.”

“It’s unthinkable that still today, one in three people still don’t have access to a clean and safe toilet – a fundamental human right,” said Jean-Laurent Ingles, SVP Household Care, Unilever. “This World Toilet Day, we encourage everyone to get involved in an Urgent Run near them to help us highlight the reasons why We Can’t Wait to improve sanitation. We must act now to save lives and tackle disease.”

Overview of Urgent Run events around the world:

SINGAPORE
The flagship Urgent Run event will kick off in Singapore, with a 5km fun run on 9 November in the picturesque East Coast Park. Organised by World Toilet Organization, the event will be attended by guest of honour Minister Lim Swee Say, WTO founder Jack Sim, and local and international run participants. Jack Sim will lead all participants in a ‘big squat’, a giant squat to symbolise solidarity with the 1 billion people who face the indignity of defecating in the open, and the run event will also feature toilet-themed games, musical performances and a lucky draw.

INDIA
Mumbai: In Dharavi, one of Asia’s largest slums, residents suffer from a lack of access to job opportunities, adequate sanitation, quality education and linkages to the rest of Mumbai, and there is only one toilet for every 1,400 inhabitants. An educational run event organised by Reality Gives on 14 November will involve children and youth in fun, educational games and sanitation training sessions.

PHILIPPINES
Manila: an educational fun run event on 15 November that will involve children from Tondo, Manila and promote health and sanitation in the areas that need it most. The event, which is organised by Smokey Tours is open to the public, and participants can join and donate their old shoes. Any money raised will be spent to build toilets in poor districts of Manila.

MOZAMBIQUE
Maputo: an event in KaMubukwana District on 15 November will involve local residents in a fun, awareness raising event, as part of a project that aims to provide basic sanitation in Maputo. The event will include a 2km run for children, and a 4km run for adult participants and music, dance, theatre, and games.
INDONESIA
Jakarta: A 5km charity fun run in Jakarta on November 16, organised by PT. Spektra Smartindo and Asosiasi Toilet Indonesia, will feature guest of honour Vice Governor of Jakarta, and the founder of the Indonesian toilet association, and musical performances.

ITALY
Milan: a 6km run on 16 November at the Idroscalo an artificial lake in Milan, organised by ACRA Association, with a small donation for participation. Barletta: A fun run event on 1 November in Barletta. Monza: a non-competitive 5km and 10km run in Monza Park, one of the largest urban parks in Europe on 9 November. Vimercate: this Urgent Run event on 15 November organised by ACRA Association will include treadmill runs, relays, races, and comedy performances.

SENEGAL
Bignona: a free 7km cross-country run on 9 November will involve students and members of local clubs and associations. Dakar: schools, local representatives, religious leaders, sport and cultural associations, women associations, and local community will be involved in an awareness-raising day in Pikine West District on 17 November, focussing on the importance of clean toilets and proper sanitation facilities. More than half of the population in Pikine West doesn't have a toilet.

BENIN
Djougou: a 3km and 5km running competition on 19 November, will mobilise communities and decision-makers around the issue of hygiene and sanitation, with participants from local communities and schools, and local government officials including the Minister for Health.

Urgent Run events will also be held in Germany, Gambia, Togo, and Ghana.

ABOUT WORLD TOILET ORGANIZATION
World Toilet Organization (WTO) is a global non-profit organisation based in Singapore. Founded in 2001 by Jack Sim, WTO is committed to improving toilet and sanitation conditions worldwide. WTO addresses the sanitation crisis by empowering local communities through powerful advocacy, education, inventive technology and local marketplace opportunities. WTO has celebrated its founding day, 19 November, as World Toilet Day since 2001. In 2013 the UN designated 19 November as UN World Toilet Day.

ABOUT DOMESTOS
Domestos, Unilever’s leading toilet cleaning brand, has a mission – a clean and safe toilet for all. Domestos has partnered with the World Toilet Organization since 2009 to help raise awareness of the importance of sanitation and support the role of sanitation in the global development agenda. Domestos’ ambition, as part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan is to help 25 million people gain access to a toilet by 2020, leading to improved health, safety, security and dignity. Domestos is achieving this ambition with partners including UNICEF and social enterprise, eKutir. For more information on Domestos and what we’re doing to help more people get access to toilets, please go to Domestos.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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RESOURCES:
The Urgent Run: www.urgentrun.com
World Toilet Organization: www.worldtoilet.org
UN World Toilet Day: www.unwater.org/worldtoiletday