



Press Release from the German Toilet Organization

Actions-March in Berlin's government quarter: Young students break Toilet-Taboo together with Parliamentary State Secretary

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(.jpg / high resolution)

Berlin, 4 of June 2018

60% of the world population lives, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) without secure sanitation, which protects health and environment. In line with the World Environment Day on the 5th of June and as a contribution to the European Sustainability Week, over 75 Berlin pupils organised an "Actions-March" in the government quarter and demanded a "Toiletised World".

Together with the German Toilet Organization e.V. (GTO) the teenagers conveyed a clear message: "Sanitation and clean water for all!" A giant toilet paper holder with demands and an oversized toilet model were transported towards the Reichstag accompanied by loud shouting and dance performances.

Along the banks of the Spree River, Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Maria Flachsbarth from the Federal Ministry for Economic Collaboration and Development (BMZ) met the demonstration march. She appreciated the pupils for their engagement – especially for such a taboo issue. Flachsbarth further emphasized the importance of toilets for the security of women and girls when they relieve themselves or practice their menstrual hygiene.

"In 2015, the international community passed a 'Contract for the Future' with 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", said Thilo Panzerbieter, founder and manager of the GTO. "Goal 6 defines that every human shall have access to clean water and sanitation till 2030."

Together with Dr. Flachsbarth, the pupils unpacked directly at the Spree an oversized SDG6 cube in order to emphasize the interrelation with the other 16 Development Goals. In the end, a large pyramid was built with a toilet as foundation.

How important secure toilets, clean water and good hygiene are, illustrate dramatic numbers: 361 000 children die annually from diarrheal diseases. 4.5 billion people worldwide live without secure sanitation. The WHO estimates that 892 million people defecate in the open – a degrading situation with severe consequences. Especially in countries with a sanitation crisis, women and children suffer. Sanitation thus contributes through private, hygienic school loos towards gender equality, since girls at the age of menstruating do not have to stay away from school. Healthy people can go to work.

The march was initiated by pupils from the Anna-Essinger-Gemeinschaftsschule, the Gemeinschaftsschule on Campus Rütli and the Georg-von-Giesche-Schule together with the GTO. The project is financially supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Collaboration and Development (BMZ), by the state office for developmental cooperation Berlin and Brot für die Welt. We also thank the supplier of washroom products, CWS-boco, who is a long-term supporter of projects of the GTO.

The GTO successfully carries out the development-policy-education-project "Toiletised World" since 2009. For this, the GTO organises one-day workshops at schools in Berlin and together with students plans public actions to raise awareness for development-policy issues.

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The German Toilet Organization e.V. (GTO) is a non-profit association, which was founded in October 2005 in Berlin. The GTO is active as a Non-governmental-organization in the fields of developmental collaboration, humanitarian aid, health and environmental protection. The vision of the GTO is equal access to clean toilets and sustainable sanitation for all humans. For this purpose, the GTO carries out projects, campaigns and educational events in Germany and abroad.

More information: www.germantoilet.org