



## Press Release from the German Toilet Organization

### Actions-March in Berlin's Governmental District: Young Pupils Break Toilet-Taboo Together with Parliamentary State Secretary

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*Berlin, 4 June 2018*

60% of the world population lives, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), without secure sanitation, which protects health and the environment. In line with the World Environment Day on 5 June and as a contribution to the European Sustainability Week, over 75 Berlin pupils organised an "Actions-March" in Berlin's governmental district 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 Cooperation and Development (BMZ) met the pupils. She voiced her appreciation for the pupils' efforts – especially for such a taboo issue. Flachsbarth further emphasised 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 director of the GTO. "Goal 6 defines that every human shall have access to clean water and sanitation until 2030."

Together with Dr. Flachsbarth, the pupils unpacked an oversized SDG6 cube, emphasizing the interrelation with the other 16 Development Goals, by the riverside of the Spree. In the end, a large pyramid was built with a toilet as its foundation.

How important secure toilets, clean water and good hygiene are, is illustrated by dramatic statistics: 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. Women and children suffer most. Gender separated, clean school toilets can actually increase school attendance of girls, by providing the privacy required, particularly when girls reach the menstrual age. Furthermore improved health in society, permits more people to 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 Cooperation 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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## Contact

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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](http://www.germantoilet.org)