

WORLD TOILET DAY 2026: FACTSHEET

SAFE TOILETS.
EQUAL FUTURES.

Ten things to know about World Toilet Day

1. World Toilet Day is celebrated every year on 19 November.
2. The aim of the day is to inspire action towards Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6): water and sanitation for all.
3. The 2026 campaign – called ‘Safe toilets. Equal futures.’ – focuses on sanitation and gender equality.
4. Everything you need to know about the World Toilet Day 2026 campaign is [here](#).
5. To support the campaign, millions of people and organizations host events and promote the issues in real life and online.
6. In 2025, World Toilet Day reached 10.2 billion accounts across social media and online channels, with over 337,000 engagements and 3,600 media mentions using #WorldToiletDay
7. World Toilet Day is coordinated by UN-Water, the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism on water and sanitation.
8. The 2026 campaign is led by the UN-Water Expert Group on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), co-coordinated by the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
9. Each year, a theme is selected that spotlights a key issue affecting the 3.4 billion people still living without a safe toilet.
10. World Toilet Day has been an annual United Nations Observance since 2013. Explore past themes and campaigns [here](#).

Four key messages about sanitation and gender equality

1. **Sanitation is foundational to gender equality.** Safe toilets protect women and girls’ health, safety, dignity and opportunity – enabling them to go to school, work and fully take part in society.
2. **The sanitation crisis affects everyone – but not equally.** Unsafe sanitation reinforces gender inequality by exposing women and girls to diseases, danger and abuse, affecting their rights to health, education and work.
3. **Safe sanitation is a universal human right.** When sanitation services fail to meet the needs of half the people, entire communities are held back.
4. **Safe toilets mean equal futures.** Women must help shape sanitation solutions to ensure services work for everybody – making toilets a force for equality that benefits everyone, everywhere, without discrimination.

What is a safe toilet?

'Safe toilet' is shorthand for 'safely managed sanitation', which means improved sanitation facilities which are not shared with other households, and the excreta produced is either: treated and disposed in situ; or, stored temporarily and then emptied and transported to treatment off-site; or, transported through a sewer with wastewater and then treated off-site. ([WHO/UNICEF](#))

What is a basic hygiene service?

A basic hygiene service means a handwashing facility with soap and water at home. Handwashing facilities include a sink with tap water, buckets with taps, tippy-taps, and jugs or basins designated for handwashing. ([WHO/UNICEF](#))

Did you know?

- Since 2015, 1.2 billion people have gained access to safe toilets, and 1.6 billion to basic hygiene services. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))
- Today, 3.4 billion people still live without safe toilets, including 354 million who practise open defecation. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))
- 1.7 billion people still lack basic hygiene services, including 611 million with no facility at all. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))
- Globally, nearly 1 in 5 (approximately 120 million) adolescent girls aged 10-19 lack access to at least basic sanitation services. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2023](#))
- Women remain underrepresented in water governance. In 79 countries, women hold fewer than half of WASH positions in government jobs, and, in 23 countries, hold fewer than 1 in 10. ([WHO/UN-Water, 2022](#))
- Today, 1 in 5 children lack basic sanitation services (427 million), and 1 in 3 children (646 million) lack basic hygiene services at school. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2024](#))
- Only 39% of schools worldwide provide menstrual health information and advice – affecting girls' education, health and wellbeing. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2024](#))
- Fewer than one-third of schools globally have menstrual waste bins in girls' toilets, which are vital for the safe disposal of sanitary pads. This falls to just 11% of schools in sub-Saharan Africa. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2024](#))
- Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene are responsible for the deaths of around 1,000 children under 5 every day. ([WHO, 2023](#))

- More than half a billion people share sanitation facilities with other households, putting women's and girls' privacy, dignity and safety at greater risk. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2023](#))
- About 14% of countries still have no mechanisms to ensure women can participate equally in water-related decision-making and water management. ([UNEP-DHI, GWP, UN Women, 2025](#))

Make a difference

Change starts with all of us. Learn, share and take action to ensure safe toilets for all.

Learn

- [Explore the campaign](#), read stories and download resources.
- [Dive into UN-Water's facts on gender](#).
- [Read the UN World Water Development Report 2026](#) to explore the gender dimensions of sanitation and water
- [Check out UNICEF's action brief](#) on *Adolescent Girls' Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene*.

Share

- **Spotlight sanitation champions** – contact and invite sanitation workers, teachers, health workers, engineers, activists or community leaders to record their experiences on short portrait videos and share them online using the hashtag #WorldToiletDay
- **Educate others and spark discussions** [using campaign visuals](#), videos and facts.
- **Share your views** on what 'Safe toilets. Equal futures.' means to you, by [using editable campaign assets](#).
- **Tell us about your activities**. Send up to 5 photos of your events, workshops, creative activities, sanitation improvements or awareness campaigns to campaigns@unwater.org with the subject line 'World Toilet Day 2026'.

Act

- **Join the conversations at #WorldToiletDay** and help raise awareness and drive decisions to ensure safe toilets for all.
- **Engage locally** and learn how sanitation and hygiene services are managed where you live.
- **Encourage inclusive participation** by supporting community initiatives led by or benefitting women and girls.
- **Use the [Activation Kit](#)** to host activities in schools, communities, or workplaces.
- **Create your own communications** by using our [editable campaign assets](#).

Explore more

[OHCHR: Women and Girls and Their Right to Sanitation](#)

[RWSN: 100 African Women Leading Africa's Water & Sanitation Future](#)

[UNICEF: Gender equality: WASH and menstrual health and hygiene](#)

[UNICEF: UNICEF and partners Amplify Girls' Voices on Menstrual Health in Ghana](#)

[UNICEF/WHO: Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2022: special focus on gender](#)

[UNICEF/WHO: Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2022: gender pullout](#)

[UNOPS: Beyond Toilets: Investing in Dignity, Equity and the Planet's Collective Future](#)

[WHO: Fact Sheet: Sanitation](#)

[WHO: Global research agenda for improving the health safety and dignity of sanitation workers](#)

[WaterAid animation, focused on public and community toilets](#)