



28 May 2014 – [One third of humanity](#) lacks access to basic sanitation. One child dies per minute, 60 per hour, 1,440 per day from preventable diseases contracted due to [lack of proper toilets](#)

. Yet, around the world, people are reluctant to take words like poo, faeces or defecation in their mouths as the subject largely remains taboo. Words like “crap” serve best as curses, and we hear them in movies, songs and daily lives. But these same words are brushed aside in development conversations – where the topic actually should be discussed.

In countries such as India, an estimated 620 million people practice open defecation, creating a major public health hazard by leaving an estimated 65 million kilograms of waste each day. There simply is too much crap to be ignored – in India, as in other parts of the world, the risks posed by this social taboo are too great, ranging from severe illnesses to increased risks of sexual violence.

2.5 billion people worldwide need a place to do their “business”. The UN, in pursuit of the [Millennium Development Goals](#), has decided it is now time to address that “business”.

Today, May 28, the fight for the right to sanitation begins in earnest. The United Nations and its partners will hold a [press briefing](#) and campaign launch at UN Headquarters to end the practice of open defecation and improve access to toilets and latrines.

The campaign aims to break the silence on talking about open defecation and the silence on talking about the people that have died, particularly children, as a result of open defecation practices. It is being launched in response to the UN's Call to Action on Sanitation, and is focusing particularly on the issue of open defecation.

In India, UNICEF has already launched a public information campaign aimed at young people with the slogan: [Take the poo to the loo](#) . The global community also celebrates the official [World Toilet Day](#) on November 19, aiming to break the taboo around toilets and draw attention to the global sanitation challenge.

Leading the campaign is UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson. "It is time to talk about open defecation", [he says](#). "To discuss the facts, the solutions and the consequences. And it is time to talk about the many countries around the world where community members, local leaders and politicians are taking positive action to end this practice."