

# India, UN sign declaration on sanitation

Statement embodies world's pledge to eradicate open defecation; PM calls it milestone

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The Centre's national "Swachhata Hi Seva" movement concluded on Tuesday, marking Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary. The conclusion was timed with the completion of a four-day "Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention" and adoption of the "Delhi Declaration" embodying world community's pledge to sanitation.

The declaration was signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the convention held at Rashtrapati Bhavan which was attended by 160 international representatives, including Sanitation Ministers from 67 countries.

Today's event was celebrated as "Swachh Bharat Diwas-2018". The declaration has four 'Ps' as guiding principle to global community's drive towards sanitation of which eradication of open defecation is substantive part. The Ps are: political leadership, people's participation, public funding and partnership.

Another salient feature of the event was distribution of "Swachh Bharat Awards".



PM Narendra Modi awards a student at the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Tuesday. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres (2L) and Union ministers Sushma Swaraj, Uma Bharti and Manoj Sinha are also seen. PTI

Haryana bagged the award for its overall achievement in cleanliness. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was present on the occasion.

"I congratulate you Prime Minister for your leadership and vision in the area. I am proud of Modi's strong leadership. India will realise the United Nations target of Sustainable Development Goal,

2030, before the deadline... eradication of open defecation is an important constituent of the goal," Guterres said.

He appreciated attendance of the foreign dignitaries taking part in the event, saying it was "inspiring". "India is leading the way in the matter," he said.

Guterres assured of UN's support to India's cleanliness drive, saying one billion

people in the India are still into open defecation.

Addressing the convention, Modi said the participation of foreign dignitaries at the event is a testimony that the Swachh Bharat campaign has become global.

"This event will prove to be an important milestone to the cause of cleanliness which is related to welfare of

humanity," Modi said.

"India's rural cleanliness coverage has increased from 38 per cent to 94 per cent. Not only toilets have been constructed, but 90 per cent of them are being used. Open defecation cases have been reduced to 20 per cent from 60 per cent," he said. Earlier, Modi paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat.