



Countdown begins to World Environment Day on 5 June 2011

From Bangalore to Bangkok, events across the world will celebrate value of forests

Nairobi, 31 May 2011 – Whether through a litter clean-up around Mount Everest, an international forest conference in Costa Rica or a music festival in Belgium, millions of people across the world will join forces to mark World Environment Day (WED) on 5 June 2011.

This year's WED theme is 'Forests: Nature at Your Service', which highlights the crucial environmental, economic and social roles played by the world's forests.

As WED host nation for 2011, India will be the focus of worldwide celebrations, with major events planned in New Delhi and Bangalore. The World 10K Race on 5 June will see some 25,000 runners pound the pavements of Bangalore in support of WED. Organizers and participants will also inaugurate a 'World 10K Forest', to which more trees will be added at future races.

UNEP will also release the *Forests in a Green Economy* report in New Delhi on 5 June. In the face of continuing deforestation (currently estimated at 5.2 million hectares worldwide per year), the report outlines how increased public and private investment in forest management and forest resources can boost employment, drastically reduce deforestation and help tackle climate change.

Beyond India, WED celebrations are already taking shape in cities, towns, villages and communities across the world, including:

- **NEPAL:** UNEP is supporting a clean-up expedition to remove an estimated 9 tons of litter in and around Mount Everest. Enlisting some 60 climber volunteers, the long-term aim of the initiative is to develop more sustainable waste management facilities and recycling plants in the region
- **CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE:** A major international summit on tropical forest basins will be held from 31 May to 6 June. The event will focus on the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Amazon, Congo and Mekong Borneo basins
- **BRAZIL:** The 'MudaRock Project' – a free music download service – will be launched on 3 June. For every song or video downloaded by users, a tree sapling will be planted in a reforestation area in Brazil. The project aims to plant one million native trees within a year.

- **COSTA RICA:** A major success story in reforestation (having increased its forest cover from 22 percent in 1995 to 51 percent by 2010), Costa Rica will host participants from 15 neighbouring countries for a training course on sustainable forest management
- **CANADA:** Toronto is the regional host city for World Environment Day celebrations in North America. To date, over 50 WED events have been registered in Canada including environmental workshops for students, a high-level consultation on the Green Economy with 40 environmental leaders and a series of book readings for children.
- **BELGIUM:** WED celebrations in Brussels will kick off with an outdoor picnic and music concert in Brussels on 5 June, featuring UN Youth Ambassador and Disney star Monique Coleman
- **BAHRAIN:** UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia will help co-ordinate a beach-cleaning and tree-planting campaign

In the run-up to World Environment Day, UNEP Goodwill Ambassadors Gisele Bündchen and Don Cheadle are going head-to-head in the WED Challenge.

Before WED officially kicks off, individuals, groups, families and schools – even entire communities - can post details of their planned green events online at <http://www.wedchallenge.org>

When registering a WED activity on the website, you'll be asked to pledge your activity to either Don or Gisele. Full of goodwill, Gisele has pledged to plant a tree for every activity registered in her name. Full of confidence, Don Cheadle has pledged to plant two.

When the votes are counted on 5 June, the result will be a new forest inaugurated by the winner, leaving a lasting green legacy from the global WED community.

Bollywood stars Priyanka Chopra and Rahul Bose are also facing off for World Environment Day in the WED Challenge India. More details are available at <http://www.wedchallenge.org/india>

Whether it's switching from plastic bags to cloth bags, car-pooling with colleagues or organizing a tree-planting day, WED activities can be big, small, local, international, noisy, quiet...just as long as they're green.

Visit www.unep.org/wed to browse the A-Z of WED ideas, find your inspiration and tell the world what you're doing.

For a comprehensive list of WED events in India and around the world, please visit: www.unep.org/wed

For more information on events for World Environment Day, please use the following regional contacts:

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