

From Kigali to Haiti

People around the planet gear up for World Environment Day

Kigali/Nairobi/Worldwide, 26 May 2010 – From Hollywood stars to schoolchildren, millions of people on every continent will take action for the planet on 5 June for World Environment Day.

Under the theme *'Many Species. One Planet. One Future'*, this year's event will celebrate the incredible diversity of life on Earth as part of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

This year's global host, Rwanda – a country of exceptional biodiversity that has made huge strides on environmental protection – will lead the celebrations with three days of keynote events.

Thousands of activities will also be organized worldwide from Hong Kong to Abidjan, with beach clean-ups, concerts, exhibits, film festivals, community events and much more.

Global Celebrations in Rwanda

The 2010 global celebrations in Rwanda will involve three days of events on 3-5 June, culminating in the epic Kwita Izina gorilla-naming ceremony in the world famous Volcanoes National Park on 5 June.

This year's ceremony will be attended by 30,000 people and will involve Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Oscar-nominated actor Don Cheadle and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, among other high-profile figures who will have the honour of naming the baby gorillas.

2-5 June: UNEP-Bayer youth conference: 'African Youth Standing up for Biodiversity' with youth from across Africa.

3 June:

- Launch of UNEP report: *'Dead Planet, Living Planet – Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration for Sustainable Development'*.
- Conference on International Biodiversity & Conservation with Achim Steiner, Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Environment Ministers from around Africa.

4 June: Launch of the updated UNEP report and documentary on *'The Last Stand of the Gorilla'*

5 June – World Environment Day:

- Kwita Izina gorilla-naming ceremony in the Volcanoes National Park.
- Launch of the WED Legacy Project: for every activity registered on the WED website, UNEP will donate US\$10 towards gorilla conservation in Rwanda. Energy company Philips will also participate in the project by donating solar home systems that will light 300 houses in Rwanda.
- Designation of Oscar-nominated actor Don Cheadle as UNEP Goodwill Ambassador.

WED events in Pittsburgh

UNEP named Pittsburgh the North American Host City in October 2009. Since then, local government officials, businesses, organizations, and the people of Pittsburgh have organized over 130 activities as part of the 'Bridging the Gap' campaign. These activities, taking place between the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on 22 April and World Environment Day on 5 June, suggest that environmental outreach and awareness should not be limited to official days of action.

Highlights from Pittsburgh include:

- The Rachel Carson symposium, which will focus on the human impact on biodiversity and features two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and world-renowned entomologist E.O. Wilson (27 May).

- The day-long Water Matters! Global Conference, which will allow citizens, students, business owners, groups, and community leaders from around North America to learn more about the future and protection of our waters (3 June).
- An attempt to break the Guinness Book of World Records' mark for the 'largest flotilla of kayaks and canoes' (5 June).
- The Water Savers Competition, whose goal is to see which neighborhoods can save the most water and energy from April to June (5 June).

WED events around the world

The celebrations in Rwanda and Pittsburgh are among the thousands of events that will take place around the globe on 5 June, from Qatar to Korea and from Serbia to Chile, to celebrate WED.

Here are a few WED highlights from every continent:

- **10:10**, a global campaign to reduce carbon emissions by 10 per cent in a year, will be launched publicly on WED, with events planned in Nigeria, Germany, Portugal, France and in cities across the United States.
- **CinemAmbiente**: Italy's top environmental film festival, in Turin, will feature more than 30 documentaries and short films on the environment.
- UNEP Goodwill Ambassador **Gisele Bündchen** will promote WED in her native Brazil in June. She also appears in a Public Service Announcement calling people for action on 5 June.
- National Geographic and GlobeScan will release the **Greendex 2010 survey** on 3 June – a unique survey ranking average consumers in 17 countries according to their environmental impact and green behaviour.
- The keynote event for the Latin America and Caribbean region will be the **WED celebrations in Haiti**, with the launch of the Haiti Global Environment Outlook report.
- **Celebrations in Europe** will include major public events in Geneva (Switzerland), Baku (Azerbaijan) and Genoa (Italy), alongside a multitude of events across the continent – among them a circus and poetry slam in Eskilstuna (Sweden) and the screening of a series of environmental films entitled 'Télégrammes Visuels' in Paris (France).
- Events will take place **across Africa**, from Cameroon to Mozambique, with a series of tree plantings, beach clean-ups and poetry contests organized around the continent.
- **West Asian celebrations**: In Bahrain, prominent poets and singers will gather to sing and talk about the environment and biodiversity.
- A wide variety of events will be organized in the **Asia-Pacific** region, from a mangrove clean-up in Jakarta (Indonesia) to the Bangladesh Ocean Festival and No Vehicle Time in Malé (Maldives).

Participate!

World Environment Day is the people's day for environmental action: everyone can take part. The WED 2010 website is more interactive than ever, with daily tips, information and statistics on biodiversity, and a platform where people around the world can register their activities. This year, the public have had a chance to vote for their favourite gorilla name – which will be announced by Don Cheadle on 5 June – and the winner of the WED Blogging Competition will travel to Rwanda to cover the epicentre of the WED celebrations.

Notes to Editors:

WED, organized by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) every year since 1972, is the UN's biggest global celebration for positive environmental action. The 2010 theme focuses on the central importance to humanity of the globe's wealth of species and ecosystems, in support of the 2010 UN International Year of Biodiversity.

This year's host country, Rwanda, was chosen for its combination of environmental richness, including rare species such as the mountain gorilla, allied to pioneering green policies.

Websites for more information:

WED website: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/>

Our world map of WED activities: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/activitymap/>

The gorilla-naming competition: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english/GorillaNaming/>

The official website of the gorilla-naming ceremony: <http://www.kwitizina.org/>

The Pittsburgh celebrations: www.unep.org/rona or www.pittsburghwed.com

CinemAmbiente: <http://www.cinemambiente.it/>

10:10 campaign: www.1010global.org

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