



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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PRESS RELEASE

“30 Ways in 30 Days” to meet 2 degrees warming limit and accelerate action toward a global Green Economy

October 5th, 2010 Mexico City, Mexico/Nairobi, Kenya – From creating mass markets for solar water heaters to planting trees and protecting forests, the United Nations Environment Programme will be releasing 30 case studies in the run up to the UN climate convention in Mexico to prove that solutions to combat Climate Change are available, accessible and replicable.

“Across the globe, community-based programmes and entrepreneurial endeavor are challenging the status-quo through innovation and creativity. Importantly, they are delivering multiple benefits from access to energy, public health improvements and reduced environmental impacts to driving a transition to low carbon, greener growth. The challenge now is to accelerate and scale-up these world-wide transitions,” said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director.

Current commitments and pledges under the Copenhagen Accord covering emissions up to 2020 provide a good platform for global action, but the level of current ambition is widely viewed as insufficient to meet the 2 degree warming limit.

The UNEP “30 Ways in 30 Days” initiative will be announced at a special Climate Neutral Network (CN Net) breakfast at the Business for the Environment Summit (B4E) in Mexico City, from 4-5 October. The B4E Summit – which is co-hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), The Global Compact, WWF, and Global Initiatives – is the world’s premier international conference for dialogue and business-driven action for the environment.

Latest members of CN Net include Saitama Prefecture in Japan, which is part of the Greater Tokyo Area hosting a population of more than 7 million, and Corporation Solar Alliance in Ukraine, which is developing next-generation technologies for energy conservation and the saving of resources.

The first case study from the “30 Ways in 30 Days” initiative is “Solar Loans for Solar Homes.” More than 60 per cent of Indian households have no access to reliable electricity supplies and depend on kerosene for light and on burning dung and wood for heat.

In an example of small-scale enterprise and entrepreneurship that expanded rapidly, UNEP’s Indian Solar Loan Programme worked with two of India’s largest banking groups in 2003 to provide low-interest loans for household photovoltaic systems. Photovoltaics are a method of generating electrical power by converting solar radiation into direct current electricity using semiconductors.

The programme provided technical support and training, as well as an interest rate buy-down that reimbursed banks for the difference between their normal lending rates and the reduced rate that borrowers paid.

While banks did not profit directly from these subsidies, they were keen to develop a new market for rural financing. Almost 20,000 solar home systems were financed between 2003 and 2007. Towards the end of the project, subsidies were gradually reduced to a free market rate, by which time other banks had begun lending on commercial terms.

The Solar Loan Programme accelerated market penetration of solar lights in the Indian countryside and inspired several similar initiatives in India and elsewhere. In 2008, the programme won the Globe Energy Award for sustainability and in 2009 it was one of only two field projects within the UN system to receive the Secretary General's UN21 Award awarded for innovation.

The Indian Solar Loan scheme has influenced national policy, with the Government of India sidelining its capital subsidy approach to supporting solar power in favour of interest subsidies. Costs of US\$1.5 million in programme support and US\$6.1 million in loans from the banking partners have been more than offset by household savings on kerosene and other traditional energy sources.

“Solar lights are a long cherished dream of rural folk who often have no power, or power supplies that are at best irregular. They are one product that can meet aspirations of people living below the poverty line. It is a good business opportunity for the Bank,” said Mr. P G Ramesh, Chairman, Pragathi Grameen Bank, Bellary, Karnataka, India.

Many of the best opportunities for climate mitigation are household-scale technologies such as solar, biogas and high efficiency appliances. Consumer and micro-lending approaches can be replicated elsewhere and their scale adjusted according to need.

Daily climate case studies will be released online at www.unep.org/unite/30ways from 1 November to 8 December. Examples span a wide range of solutions across the globe from “green” tea to energy entrepreneurs, transport solutions, carbon finance innovation, eco-living and adaption strategies.

View a video of the Indian Solar Loan Programme here:

http://www.unep.org/newscentre/videos/shortfilms/2008-09-15_TaleOfTwoLights.flv

Editors Notes

The UN climate convention is COP16/CMP6 in Cancun, Mexico, and will be held from 29 November to 10 December.

Latest participants of UNEP's Climate Neutral Network – September 2010

Climate Action (company), UK

Climate Action is a multimedia platform consisting of a website, newsletter and annual publication, produced in partnership with UNEP. The platform aims to encourage businesses and

large organizations to reduce their carbon footprint. Climate Action has joined the Climate Neutral Network, after four years of collaboration with UNEP. Climate Action and UNEP will launch the fourth Climate Action publication in Cancun on 3 December.

Saitama Prefecture (region), Japan

Saitama Prefecture is part of the Greater Tokyo Area, and most of Saitama's cities can be described as suburbs of Tokyo. Saitama has a population of over 7 million. In February 2009, Saitama established the 'Stop Global Warming: Saitama Navigation 2050' plan, which establishes policies and objectives to meet specific emissions reduction goals. The prefecture is also actively promoting the widespread use of renewable energy.

Corporation Solar Alliance (company), Ukraine

Corporation Solar Alliance is a business organization and a scientific enterprise, which is developing next generation technologies for energy conservation and saving of resources, while respecting the basic principles for the protection of the environment and ecology. The company's activities include converting organic and inorganic waste into alternative energy sources.

Coffea Circulor (company), Norway

Coffea Circulor imports high quality coffee to Scandinavia. Situated in Arendal, Norway, Coffea Circulor's mission is to carry out coffee trading on the principle of the triple bottom line – people, planet and profit. The company works directly with farmers in Kenya and Uganda to ensure sustainability, transparency, and the empowerment of local farmers and the community. The company seeks clients and partners who share the company's philosophy of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Procea (company), Italy

Procea supplies consultancy services to organizations and privately held companies. The company has established the private initiative 'KlimaNet', which is designed to assist enterprises to implement and document environmental efforts. KlimaNet is a pragmatic yet ambitious environmental management system, which provides a unique opportunity for organizations and companies to implement environmentally sustainable practices in their cooperation with suppliers.

Please see the Climate Neutral Network homepage: www.unep.org/climateneutral

For more information, please contact

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