



Strengthening Partnerships for Low Carbon Lifestyles in Kenya In Celebration of World Environment Day

“Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy” - 2008 WED Message



Nairobi, 31 May 2008 – The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), through its Regional Office for Africa is partnering with the Kenya Organisation of Environmental Education (KOEE), the Rotary Club of Nairobi and Nature Kenya in celebrating World Environment Day (WED) through a number of activities aimed at raising awareness on the need for communities and individuals shift to lower carbon life-styles, in line with this year’s global slogan **“Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy”**.

The Green Rotary Initiative will be launched today at the Nairobi City Park- Parklands, through a number of public green activities including a Tree planting at the City Park Forest, a clean up operation of the public grounds in the forest, the “Green Cup” soccer tournament which will bring together children and youth from 8 schools in Nairobi, and Nature walks within the forest, conducted by experts. This will be an educative tour of City Park’s plethora of species in the bird, plant and insect groups respectively. Local businesses and community groups will also exhibit and sell environmental friendly products. Corporate companies and foundations will also donate litter bins to various schools on this occasion.

Private sector companies are increasingly working with non-governmental organizations, cities or governments to identify and implement best practice solutions to reduce emissions. Similarly, local and national governments are seeking opportunities to partner with business on delivering low carbon solutions.

One of the major highlights of the World Environment Week in Nairobi is the Green Awards Ceremony on 3 June to announce the winners of the UNEP/Eco-schools 2008 WED School Art, Painting and Photograph Competition, which will culminate in the launch of A children's book entitled “My Future Begins Now: Environment In Children’s Eyes”, sponsored by Safaricom, consisting of a compilation of winning entries of the previous 5 years national WED competition.

The aim of the competition is to raise environmental awareness among young people and create a better understanding of the impacts of human activities on the environment. It builds on partnerships with schools and community organizations to spread environmental awareness and good consumption practices in caring for the environment. In light of the recent post election violence crisis experienced in Kenya, the young artists, writers and photographers were requested to express their thoughts and views on the impact of the crisis to the environment and to portray how Kenya’s unique culture and peace eventually can help in saving the environment, through the theme “Different tribes – One People, One Country, One Environment”.

In relation to the specific context in Kenya, “Play for the Planet, Play for Peace” tournaments and tree plantings will take place in other areas in Nairobi and Mombasa in the week leading up to 5 June. The national WED celebrations in Kenya will be held in Eldoret. Aside from the festivities planned such as road marches, bicycle campaigns, presentations from various schools and institutions, the Ministry of Environment will be visiting the local stadium which accommodated thousands of internally displaced refugees during the election crisis. This led to a lot of the towns’ public parks being degraded during this emergency procedure.

The activities in Kenya are part of worldwide celebrations centred on the annual WED of 5 June. More than 100 countries are to mark this important day. The main international celebrations of the World Environment Day this year will be held in Wellington, in New Zealand.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, said: ““World Environment Day (WED) 2008 uses the theme of Kick the *C02* Habit to catalyze grassroots action on the challenge of this generation—climate change. It is more than a strong and catchy phrase. If we are to move the global economy to a greener and cleaner one, a sharp reduction in the inefficient use of fossil fuels allied to an increased up take of renewable energy must be at the centre of the international response”. “On this special UN day, let us send a loud and clear message that the global public wants the transformational changes already underway to continue and to accelerate—that each and everyone wants personal, corporate and political action to “Kick the *C02* Habit””, he added.

Recognizing that climate change is becoming the defining issue of our era, UNEP is asking countries, companies and communities to focus on greenhouse gas emissions and how to reduce them. The World Environment Day will highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General said “The message of World Environment Day 2008 is that we are all part of the solution. Whether you are an individual, an organization, a business or a government, there are many steps you can take to reduce your carbon footprint. It is message we all must take to heart. “

Note to editors:

The Green Awards Ceremony will take place at the Hilton Hotel in Nairobi from 12 noon on 3 June.

World Environment Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP. WED is commemorated each year on 5 June in a different city. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

The day's agenda is to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. World Environment Day is also a popular event with colourful activities such as street rallies,

bicycle parades, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, as well as recycling and cleaning-up campaigns.

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