

UNEP's CLIMATE HEROES: ADVENTURE ACTIVISM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Born out of the UN-wide call for the world to *Unite to Combat Climate Change* in the lead up to the critical negotiations this December in Copenhagen, one component of this year's World Environment Day will be the launch of the Climate Heroes. This long-term platform supports a select group who are undertaking exceptional personal feats, high-profile expeditions and other innovative acts of environmental activism to demonstrate their commitment and to raise awareness for one simple idea: *Your planet needs You!* These projects highlight environmental "hot topics" like CO2 output, finding smart solutions to beat waste and tree-planting. Participating under the global banner, *Unite to Combat Climate Change*, their acts, and the attention they generate, will most importantly give voice to the movement of individuals and organizations across the globe who care about the state of our planet and want to see real change and real commitment.

The collaboration between UNEP and the Climate Heroes will build interest, inspiration and momentum to the UN's campaign **Seal the Deal!** urging world leaders to seal a deal on a fair, balanced and effective agreement at the climate meeting in December.

"Climate heroes are people who take a special initiative, who go beyond the normal responsibilities that we have, who pioneer with unusual initiatives and ideas. They show the kind of commitment, enthusiasm and understanding of how important it is that we all become heroes in order to address climate change," said Executive Director Achim Steiner. "So thank you Climate Heroes and let us hope that your actions will lead us all to being able to say "Yes, in Copenhagen, we sealed the deal!," he added.

To date, UNEP's Climate Heroes include

Roz Savage who is known for her inspirational solo row across the Atlantic Ocean and who will now row across the Pacific Ocean and walk from London to Copenhagen with the environmental message to take action on CO2 levels by inspiring people to walk more and drive less. Her initiative, called **Pull Together**, calls upon her supporters around the world to *Pull Together* and match her 10,000 oar strokes each day with 10,000 steps. In October Roz and thousands of supporters will assemble at Big Ben in London and, over a period of six weeks, march more than 600 miles to Copenhagen to address the conference delegates. At this time, she will deliver the results of the initiative, essentially a walking petition, as a symbol of commitment to taking immediate, aggressive action to reduce global CO2 levels.

David de Rothschild and a cherry-picked crew of adventurers, thinkers and artists plan to set sail approximately 10,000 nautical miles across the Pacific. The boat, called *Plastiki*, is a distinctive, one-of-a-kind 60-foot (20m) catamaran made out of reclaimed plastic bottles, srPET plastic and recycled waste products. Their mission: to beat waste, raise awareness on the issues facing our planet and be the catalyst to activate change by bringing smart sustainable solutions to the forefront. The voyage will sail through a number of exciting, challenging and environmentally-sensitive regions, including the ominously named Great Eastern Pacific Garbage Patch, an area

six times the size of England where plastic outweighs plankton by 6 to 1 – essentially, the world’s largest waste dump.

Project Kaisei consists of a team of innovators, ocean lovers, sailors, scientists, sports enthusiasts and environmentalists who have come together with a common purpose: to study how to capture plastic waste in the ocean, detoxify, and recycle it into diesel fuel. Every year over 60 billion tons of plastic are produced, much of it for one-time use and less than five percent of the world’s plastics are recycled. National Geographic estimates that over 85 million plastic bottles are used every three minutes. Currently, there are no proposed solutions to resolve the issue of plastics in the oceans. The first mission will start this summer and will be critical to understanding the logistics that will be needed for a successful clean-up operation as some of the technology required for such a feat has never been utilized in oceanic conditions.

Luo Hong is an activist environmental photographer whose work has been exhibited in China and is currently on exhibit at UN Headquarters in New York. Devoted to natural landscape and wild animal photography, Luo is a frequent traveler to Africa, where he has highlighted the beauty of wildlife and its fragility against the backdrop of climate change. In 2006 he established the Luo Hong Environment Foundation whose aim is to train and reward youth worldwide working in environmental protection. Two years ago he travelled to the Arctic and Antarctic to photograph wild animals whose habitat is slowly disappearing with the melting tundra. In 2008, the Foundation sponsored UNEP’s Painting Competition by Children in China, a hugely successful event with about 1.5 million participants. The competition was held again this year. All the photos from his exhibits in China have been auctioned for charity.

Charles and Sho Scott (8 years old) This father-son pair are riding connected bikes from Cape Souya in northern Japan to Kyushu in the south, or 2,900 miles (4,700 kilometers), as a campaign to raise awareness on climate change and in support of UN efforts to seal a deal on a climate treaty in Copenhagen in December. Entitled “United to Combat Climate Change—Ride Japan”, the ride will pass through 11 of the World’s Cultural Heritage sites along the way. The two-month journey will also raise funds for tree-planting efforts with the target of seven billion trees planted by the end of 2009, or one for each person on the planet.

These are the Climate Heroes, join them and us on www.sealthedeal2009.org. Please sign our online petition!

For more information, please contact:

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