



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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Your Planet Needs You!

Millions of people around the world Unite to Combat Climate Change for World Environment Day 2009

Manama, 3 June, 2009– People around the world will unite for the planet on 5 June for World Environment Day 2009, with a strong call for environmental action just six months before the crucial United Nations climate change talks in Copenhagen. This year's theme is 'Your Planet needs You! Unite to combat climate change' – a topic that reflects everyone's individual responsibility to protect the planet, as well as the urgency for nations to agree on a new climate change deal in December.

The United Nations Environment Programme, the Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) in collaboration with ALBA has organized two events for the celebration of World Environment Day 2009. An official celebration ceremony under the patronage of H.H Sheikh Abdulla **bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Governor of the Southern Directorate and President of the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment, and Wildlife**, will take place **on the 7th of June 2009 at the Cultural Centre in Manama**. Statements will be delivered by: Dr. Adel Al Zayani, the Director-General of the Public Commission for the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment & Wildlife, Mr. Sayed Aqa, UN Resident Coordinator in the Kingdom of Bahrain (on behalf of the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon), Statement by Mr. Ahmed Saleh Al Noaimi, Chief Executive Officer of ALBA, and by Dr. Habib El-Habr, Regional Director and Representative, UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (on behalf of UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner). A UNEP report titled "*The Natural Fix? The Role of Ecosystems in Climate Mitigation*", will be launched during the ceremony.

Another **celebration, targeting youth** will be held **on Friday 5th of June at the Bahrain City Center, Main Galleria, at 3 PM**, under the patronage of **H. E. Shaikh Fawaz Bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa**, President of General Organization for Youth & Sports. This event will be open to the public and will include a show presented by more than 80 children and youth representing different schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The show will include songs, dances, letters, and a play that calls upon people to stop pollution and to unite to combat climate change. The public will also participate in several activities that will be carried out. In addition, children who pledge to protect the environment will be invited to stamp their finger on a tree painted by Bahraini **Artist Abbas Al Mossawi**.

World Environment Day is truly a People's Day: it is the chance for everyone, young and old, with their community or with close friends, to show that they care for the planet.

Note To Editors

World Environment Day

World Environment Day (WED) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Commemorated yearly on 5 June, WED 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 objective is to give a human face to environmental issues and empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development.

This year's host is Mexico which reflects the growing role of the Latin American country in the fight against climate change, including its growing participation in the carbon markets.

Seal the Deal

Countries will gather in December 2009 for the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen to respond to one of the greatest challenges ever to face humanity and the planet. Scientific evidence is unequivocal in its findings, indicating that humankind is responsible for causing and accelerating climate change. A temperature rise beyond 2 to 2.5 degrees centigrade risks serious impacts on ecosystems, health, and human well-being.

The most vulnerable groups, including women, children and the poorer segments of society – especially in developing countries, where greater poverty and vulnerability limit the capacity to withstand the effects of climate change – will suffer the most.

Combating climate change requires substantial reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions. This formidable task requires unprecedented international cooperation and collective action, given that greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.

The UN Climate Change Conference offers a unique window of opportunity to achieve this goal. Bali has laid the groundwork for what a Copenhagen deal must include, specifically: mitigation targets for developed countries, mitigation efforts on the part of developing countries, financing for both mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries; institutional governance mechanisms, and a framework for adaptation.

The Seal the Deal campaign aims to urge the world's decision-makers to conclude a fair and effective UN climate agreement that sets the world on a path to tackling climate change in a responsible, effective manner.

Biosequestration

In this UNEP-commissioned, Rapid Assessment report we present carbon capture and storage through a Green Economy lens outlining the potential in terms of natural systems – systems from forests to grasslands that have been doing the job in a tried and tested way for millennia. Currently the world's ecosystems, instead of maintaining and enhancing nature's carbon capture and storage capacity, are being depleted at an alarming rate. Some 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions are coming from the clearing and burning of forests, the vast carbon bank in peatlands and the tundra are threatened by drainage and thawing and many

agricultural soils are degraded or degrading. Safeguarding and restoring carbon in three systems – forests, peatlands and agriculture might over the coming decades reduce well over 50 gigatonnes of carbon emissions that would otherwise enter the atmosphere: others like grasslands and coastal ones such as mangroves are capable of playing their part too.

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