

Press Release

Eye on Earth: UAE, UNEP sign Summit Declaration to be submitted to 2012 Earth Summit in Rio

Abu Dhabi, December 15, 2011 – The Eye on Earth Summit Declaration, a key outcome of the Summit, which will provide input to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, was today signed by the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) after endorsement from the public and representatives of government, business, and civil society.

At the Closing Ceremony of Eye on Earth Abu Dhabi 2011 Summit, the Eye On Earth Community Declaration was signed by H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and Co-Chair of the Summit, H.E. Dr Rashid Ahmad bin Fahd, UAE Minister of Environment and Water and Peter Gilruth, UNEP Director of the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) on behalf of the United Nations Environmental Programme's Executive Director, Achim Steiner.

"To have reached full agreement on the Summit Declaration by all parties and to have secured the endorsement of the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water and the United Nations Environment Programme, highlights all that has been achieved at Eye on Earth over the last four days," said H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and Co-Chair of the Summit. "The Eye on Earth community will now submit this Declaration for consideration by Rio+20, marking the 'Moment' that will drive forward the 'Movement' of ensuring access to the global pool of environmental and societal data by all those who need it around the world."

"Eye on Earth has spotlighted the issues but also the opportunities for accelerating and scaling up more intelligent management and access to the wealth of environmental data being generated across the globe," said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director. "Today's Declaration can assist nations, meeting for the Rio+20 Summit in Brazil next June, to chart a course towards a low carbon, resource efficient global Green Economy - one that can generate growth and jobs, eradicate poverty and propel sustainable development but in a way that keeps humanity's footprint within planetary boundaries," he said.

The Summit Declaration's contents were negotiated and finalised by Civil Society and ministerial delegations from around the world, Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), who have been attending the Eye on Earth Summit. The globally significant Eye on Earth Community Declaration process was facilitated by Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI).

The Declaration recalls "Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which amongst others recognises that each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, and that States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available."

The declaration will be submitted by AGEDI and UNEP at the end of this week to the 2nd Intercessional Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which will be held at the UN Secretariat in New York.

Unanimous consensus on the final text of the declaration was reached after open discussions with UN Major Groups and Civil Society, and a 'Rio +20 Session' for Ministerial delegations, which took place on Monday 12th December 2011 and was attended by 16 Governmental delegations. The meeting was facilitated by UNEP and AGEDI.

The Eye on Earth Summit is dedicated to the critical issue of greater access to environmental and societal data for enhanced decision making, especially in emerging economies. The Summit brings together the global leadership of the environmental information movement, a group dedicated to bringing the benefits of better information to people and decision-makers around the planet.

Speakers at the Summit, which opened on Monday December 12th at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), included UAE leadership, President Bill Clinton, Dr. Jane Goodall, OBE, Dr. Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, Dr. Russell Mittermeier, President Conservation International and Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Secretary General of Rio+20.

The public attended the Eye on Earth Abu Dhabi 2011 Exhibition which ran side by side with the Summit and showcased the very best from around the world in the field of environmental and geospatial data access and analysis including Abu Dhabi's pioneering 2030 strategic vision for a sustainable economy.

Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, the Eye on Earth Abu Dhabi 2011 Summit and Exhibition is hosted by

Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), facilitated by Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) and held in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The final text of the Eye on Earth Summit Declaration is available for download at www.eyeonearthsummit.org

The international science news network, SciDev.net, has a special Eye on Earth micro website covering Summit events with their team of seven journalists from around the world here: <http://bit.ly/uytI9L>

A video news release that includes President Bill Clinton's remarks is available here: <http://prn.to/vQ78Tb>

Individual video announcements by are available here: <http://bit.ly/sYTFN4>

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For more information visit, www.eyeonearthsummit.org

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About Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD)

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) was established in 1996 to preserve Abu Dhabi's natural heritage, protect our future, and raise awareness about environmental issues. EAD is Abu Dhabi's environmental regulator and advises the government on environmental policy. It works to create sustainable communities, and protect and conserve wildlife and natural resources. EAD also works to ensure integrated and sustainable water resources management, to ensure clean air and minimise climate change and its impacts. For more information, visit www.ead.ae

About Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI)

Conceived by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and launched by the Abu Dhabi Government in 2002, under the guidance and patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, AGEDI provides user-friendly access to high-quality environmental information, through a variety of information products. While EAD champions AGEDI locally, the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) champions it regionally and globally. AGEDI's objectives include; to enhance environmental data collection and assessment, to increase data capacities for local, national, regional, and global environmental decision making, to ensure sustainable development planning is based on quality, timely, useable, and updated data and information, to provide accessibility of data and information to all stakeholders, to enhance national and international mechanisms of information processing and exchange and to enhance national capacities in information handling and communications. For more information, visit www.agedi.ae

About United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP is the designated authority of the United Nations system in environmental issues at the global and regional level. UNEP's mission is 'to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations'. UNEP is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, visit www.unep.org

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