



“Ganges Expedition” Gateway for Water Campaigns - Green Cross

New Delhi, 10 September 2009 – Green Cross International (GCI) supports the “Ganges Expedition” by the Swiss adventurer Andy Leemann as it will be an invaluable tool to support one of its primary focus activities – water campaigns.

“This is a unique opportunity where environmental concerns and sustainable solutions have inspired Kuoni and Green Cross as partners to this unique expedition,” said Adam Koniuszewski, GCI Chief Operating Officer. “We look forward to using the images and video footage from the origins of the Ganges in Gangotri to its end in the Bay of Bengal in the run-up to the Copenhagen climate summit and beyond.”

Water is a priority area of work for the GCI, not only to prevent conflict among States that share river water resources, but also to facilitate access to clean and safe drinking water to the needy populations. Ganges is both an important international and national river. It supports some of the most densely populated regions of India along its 2500 kilometre stretch.

Mapping the current state of this river through photographs and video footage will provide an invaluable resource to support efforts aimed at restoring its health. It will also provide a good reference point for likely changes in the near future expected to be caused by Climate change.

“As the reality of Climate Change sets in, with some changes already happening, it is important to prepare for future impacts on the Ganges river basin,” said Prof. Mohan Munasinghe, a special GCI envoy. He shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for work on global warming and sustainable development, as Vice Chairman of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC-AR4).

“Coping with water stress will be a central challenge in the years to come,” Prof Munasinghe said. “Seven of the world’s largest rivers originate in the Himalayas, including the Yangtze and the Ganges, supplying water to 40 per cent of the world's population.”

“With the Himalayan glaciers in retreat, stringent precautions must be taken to avoid undesirable climate change impacts that are likely to take place,” he added. As a keynote speaker, Prof. Munasinghe elaborated some of these impacts, including changes in precipitation and ground water table levels. “This expedition will help raise scientific knowledge and public awareness about impacts that climate change will have.”

Up to 15 crew members, including invited guests, will be travelling down the river, guided by Andy Leemann, who has led similar expeditions before on great rivers in other continents – such as the Amazon and Orinoco in South America, and Zambesi in Africa, as well as the Mekong in Asia.

For more information on GCI, please our visit website: www.gci.ch

“Ganges Expedition” Highlights

The Ganges Expedition is a unique project supported by AB Inflatables, Green Cross International and Kuoni. On 14 September 2009, an international team of specialists starts travelling the entire length of India’s national river – 2 500 kilometres from its source to the delta. The journey commences on foot and then on boats - drawing attention to the environmental threats in and around the river and the need for sustainable solutions.