



Update: Green Schools in Africa extends to four more schools in Ghana, giving more kids Smart Water

Geneva, 26 May 2010 – Green Cross International (GCI) on Africa Day announced the extension of the Smart Water for Green Schools project to four more schools in Ghana. This follows a successful pilot phase at the Al-Iman Primary School in the Bong Ahafo Region. The project extension to the additional schools will provide 2,000 school children and some 70 teachers in the five communities with access to water and better sanitation, benefiting a local population of 10,500.

“It is the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the pilot communities that has ensured that the project is extended. The Smart Water for Green Schools project is vital to the health and livelihood of communities in Ghana because of our diminishing water tables and polluted water sources,” said Mubarick Masawudu, President and CEO of Green Cross Ghana. “The water collected in the harvesting systems is often the only source of clean water in the community,” he said.

The project builds reliable and long-lasting rainwater harvesting systems and ecological latrines in schools. It is a cost effective and efficient means to secure water supplies and improve water sanitation for entire school communities. The project also ensures hygiene and sanitation education. By encouraging exchanges between schools in the same river basins, the partnership aims to promote smart water systems and water conservation at local, national and international levels. Providing water and sanitation services to schools is an important step to engage children and communities in improving their water security and maintaining their roles as guardians of healthy and vital river ecosystems.

The project is being supported by GCI partner Pureology Serious Colour Care® with the UK branch of Pureology recently announcing their commitment to support a specific school.

“We are excited to support the extension, specifically the Smart Water for Green Schools initiative at the Makango Roman Catholic School in the Northern Region of Ghana in order to ensure the 354 students at the school can enjoy a safe source of water as well as proper sanitation to ultimately improve their education,” said Claire Townend, General Manager Redken & Pureology UK and Ireland.

This announcement comes on Africa Day, held annually on the 25 May. GCI is committed to promoting peaceful, integrated and equitable use of shared watercourses, sustainable access to drinking water and sanitation to children in West Africa.

“These goals are intrinsically linked. No access to water can be sustainable without peace and joint management of resources,” says Pierre Muller, GCI Vice-President and former mayor of Geneva, Switzerland. According to the World Bank, only 58% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa has access to a piped water supply and only 37% has access to improved sanitation.

GCI has worked on water access in Africa since 1994 and today has national offices in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Swaziland.

Green Cross International is actively promoting the ratification and ultimate entry into force of the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention to establish basic standards and rules for cooperation on the use, management and protection of the world’s 263 international watercourses. Currently, the Convention has 18 contracting states – 17 short of the number required for implementation.

“West African States have engaged in ambitious trans-boundary basin organisations such as the Volta Basin Organization or the Organization for the Management of the Senegal River (OMVS) and this ought to be applauded. The ratification of the Convention in West Africa is of particular importance as it would harmonize regional efforts, fill in gaps of governance and provide coverage for the 20 smaller West African trans-boundary watercourses not governed by any international governance mechanisms,” said GCI Water Programme Leader Marie-Laure Vercambre. “Therefore GCI and Green Cross’s West African national organizations, together with partners, are supporting national consultations to discuss

the relevance of the UN Watercourses Convention in Ghana and Burkina Faso, both riparian States of the Volta basin.”

About Green Cross International

Green Cross International (GCI) is a leading environmental organisation. Founded by President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, this non-profit and non-governmental organisation promotes a combination of high level advocacy with key international stakeholders, runs campaigns and manages local projects to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation. GCI is present in over 30 countries and has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. More information about GCI is available at www.gci.ch and on twitter @GreenCrossInt

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