



MEDIA RELEASE

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MILLIONS OF VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP THE WORLD'S ICONIC SITES

Sydney, Australia – What do the Nile River, Copacabana Beach and Sydney Harbour have in common? All three will be among the many sites of community-led environmental clean ups taking place next weekend as part of the global Clean Up the World campaign.

Over 600 members, mobilising over 35 million volunteers from 122 countries, will participate in this year's Clean Up the World Weekend, celebrated globally on 15-17 September.

The campaign, held in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has grown steadily since the inaugural event in 1993. Activities range from cleaning up small villages to overhauling entire countries. Across many regions communities also implement recycling and educational programmes, as well as water and energy conservation projects.

Since the start of the campaign, Clean Up the World members worldwide have collected an estimated 3,574,991 tonnes of rubbish – enough to fill 5,710 Olympic size swimming pools. Plastic, glass, metal and cigarette butts are among the most commonly found rubbish items every year.

“From the world's iconic sites to the sites of significance to remote local communities, Clean Up the World campaign brings people together in a meaningful activity that changes their lives and environment for the better,” said the campaign's Chairman and Founder Ian Kiernan, Recipient of the Order of Australia.

“Clean Up the World mobilizes people around a powerful idea – taking the challenge of environment and sustainable development to our front doors, our backyards, and everywhere else around the globe. It comes with another idea that UNEP strongly believes in: that what we consider waste and rubbish today could become a resource for tomorrow,” said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

Volunteers from fourteen countries across the Mediterranean Sea will engage in a wide range of activities going from underwater clean ups to environmental parades in a joint effort to promote greener living in this iconic region.

In Egypt, the Arab Office for Youth and the Environment is focusing on the Clean Up the Nile initiative with participation of 17 cities, which seeks to highlight the River's importance for agriculture and development in this desertification-prone region.

School children, divers, snorkellers and community volunteers will be cleaning up the world-famous Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This clean up event is coordinated by Brazil's popular TV show “Programa Na Praia” (“On the Beach”), which raises environmental awareness across the country.

On the island of Newfoundland, off Canada's Atlantic coast, Ocean Net volunteers will celebrate the 1000th marine clean up conducted since the group's establishment in 1997 with underwater and beach clean ups at Topsail Beach.

In China's City of Shaoxing, situated in the Yangtze River delta, about 100 cycling enthusiasts will collect roadside rubbish during a bike ride on the Clean Up the World weekend, targeting in particular plastic bags and drink containers.

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In Australia, where the Clean Up the World campaign started fourteen years ago, volunteers will remove rubbish from the Sydney Harbour and Lane Cove National Park. Dozens more Australian volunteers will work with overseas communities as far as Ghana, the Philippines and the Kingdom of Tonga to help improve local environment and livelihoods, promoting this Australian campaign across the world.

“Many communities across the globe have faced uncertainty over the past year. Clean Up the World is an opportunity to break down geographical and political barriers by working together to look after our shared environment. I encourage more groups to join us in creating greener cities and communities across the world,” concluded Ian Kiernan.

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For more information, contact Xenya Cherny Scanlon at +61 2 9692 1215, world@cleanup.com.au or visit www.cleanuptheworld.org.

A three-minute B-roll in Betacam SP format, photographs and detailed information about Clean Up the World activities in your region/country are available upon request.

Clean Up the World is a campaign held in conjunction with our Primary Partner UNEP. Patron – Veolia Environnement. Global Media Partner – National Geographic Channels International. Sponsors – Brambles and Qantas. Supporter – The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

NOTES TO THE EDITORS

Of 624 Clean Up the World members in 2006, 207 come from Africa; 171 from Asia Pacific; 82 from Europe; 138 from Latin America and the Caribbean; 11 from North America; and 16 from West Asia.

Countries with the highest participation this year are India, Nigeria, Argentina and Kenya.

Countries participating in the Clean Up the World campaign for the first time in 2006 are Afghanistan, Albania, Guyana and Latvia.

About Clean Up the World

The Clean Up campaign started in 1989 when an Australian solo-yachtsman and builder Ian Kiernan, appalled by the amount of rubbish he came across while sailing, organized a clean up of the Sydney Harbour, during which some 40,000 volunteers removed rusted car bodies, plastics, glass bottles and cigarette butts from the water.

The campaign went global in 1993, with Sydney becoming Clean Up the World's headquarters. Today it brings together hundreds of members from around the world ranging from local community groups to national campaigns that carry out environmental projects throughout the year. The Clean Up the World Weekend held in September each year has the highest participation of all. For more information, visit www.cleanuptheworld.org.