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Next conferences to be held in China, India, Africa and Latin America

World Resources Forum goes abroad

Against the backdrop of the multiple crises of the past years - financial, food and energy - the World Resources Forum announced today an expansion of its activities. On top of the successful bi-annual events in Davos, Switzerland, the Forum will start organizing conferences and smaller sized meetings in all regions of the world. An independent association has been set up to this end, supported by governments, industry and NGO's.

The new World Resources Forum (WRF) Association was inaugurated today at the town hall in St. Gallen, Switzerland, in the presence of representatives of its founding members BAFU/FOEN (the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment), Empa (Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology), HP (Hewlett-Packard) and the city of St. Gallen.

Xaver Edlmann, president of the WRF and member of the Board of Directors of Empa, outlined steps towards an "intensified and expanded outreach of the Forum to all actors in the world that are essential for addressing the immediate challenge of a dramatically improved management of global natural resources. Resources are getting scarce, in terms of physical availability, strategic access, or economic, social and environmental limits. With this expanded Forum we will contribute to exchanging knowledge and promoting innovation, so that resource productivity will be increased significantly, ultimately with a factor of five or more. We need to do more with less, in order to safeguard the existence of our planet."

The first WRF outside Switzerland will be held in Beijing, China, October 21-23, 2012, and will address the Green Economy. This conference is organized with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Institute for Process Engineering. An India Resource Forum is tentatively planned for the beginning of 2013, and the WRF plans to support meetings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (African Development Forum, 23-25 October this year) and Berlin (European Resources Forum, 13-14 November).

"It is very important to step up our activities", says Xaver Edlmann. "Our participants and partners have been wanting this for years. With the new association we can devote all our attention on a full-time basis to promoting a strategic vision of resource productivity in all parts of the world. I expect that after Europe and Asia we will also be able to go to Latin America and Africa".

The new association will have the following Board Members:

- Xaver Edelmann (President WRF)
- Bruno Oberle (Head of Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, FOEN)
- Fredy Brunner (City Council St.Gallen)
- Alice Kaudia (Environmental Secretary, State of Kenya)
- Jinghai Li (Vice-President, Chinese Academy of Sciences)
- Sibylle Rock (WW Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Hewlett-Packard)
- Harry Lehmann (Director, German Environmental Agency, UBA)
- Shaoyi Li (UNEP International Resource Panel)
- Laura Ochoa (Master's Student at ETHZ, Zurich)
- Anders Wijkman (Member, Club of Rome, Former MEP)

Bruno Oberle, FOEN, commented: "We are very pleased to have the Secretariat of the WRF in Switzerland, since it emphasizes once more our openness towards the international community. Global economic, trade and environmental agendas are discussed and shaped here in Switzerland, not only in Geneva, but also elsewhere in the country. The resource agenda is international, and we expect that the World Resources Forum will also help our Swiss business sector to connect with their partners abroad. All of which is needed to improve our global resource management."

Klaus Hieronymi, Chairman of the Environmental Board, Hewlett-Packard EMEA, said: "HP is delighted to be a part of the World Resources Forum Association and to participate in the global discussion over resource management and the value of raw materials. The global economy is currently facing a paradigm shift in e-waste, where the high costs of e-waste are being replaced by e-waste as a valuable commodity. In this context, new social and regulatory approaches to resource management will need to consider the full life cycle of products to ensure efficient use and re-use of raw materials. HP looks forward to tackling the challenges and opportunities of this new dynamic at the World Resources Forum in China and beyond."

Fredy Brunner, city St. Gallen, welcomes "yet another innovation-led initiative in our city, which fits in very well with Empa, the University of St. Gallen as well as our Energiestadt initiative".

The new Association will be led by former UNEP diplomat Bas de Leeuw, who says that "more and more organizations are working in this field, for specific resources or for specific audiences. We welcome these initiatives and would like to provide a global platform, giving our members and our conference audiences the possibility of practical implementation-oriented snapshot experiences, where they can inform themselves about the latest trends and new cutting edge initiatives and partners".

Urging policy makers to demonstrate a sense of urgency for resource issues similar to what they do for financial crises, De Leeuw points out that addressing resources challenges require significant investments on a global scale. Sharing information about trends and options helps ensure that these investments will be efficient and effective. In developing countries, the World Bank has estimated, that the need for investments in greening infrastructure, such as buildings, the energy and transport sectors, could reach US\$264-\$563 billion by 2030. "This is why it is so important that the WRF works with and for developing countries as well", he says, "decision-makers from these countries are very welcome to join our initiative, and many of them have already done so."

Among the supporters and sponsors of the WRF or its current or past activities are the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), UBA (Federal Environmental Agency Germany), Stiftung Mercator Schweiz, SATW (Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences), A+, Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, DEZA/SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), SECO (Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs), GeSi (Global e-Sustainability Initiative), MISTRA (Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research, Sweden), Koli Forum, Finland, Rathenau Institute, The Netherlands, Council for less common elements (Switzerland), and the Indian National Academy of Engineering. Bio Friedrich Schmidt-Bleek (Factor Ten Institute, France) is an honorary member.

Further information

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Details about the upcoming **WRF2012**, to be held in Beijing, China, 21-23 October 2012:

<http://www.worldresourcesforum.org/call-papers-china-wrf-2012-published>