

PRESS RELEASE

Pax Arctica expedition first on the ice to witness major break-off of Arctic ice shelf around Ward Hunt Island

Resolute Bay, Nunavut – August 3, 2008

An international coalition of children exploring the high Arctic witnessed firsthand the latest dramatic development of climate change on Tuesday, July 22 as a huge chunk of ice was observed drifting off the Ward Hunt Island main ice shelf, forming two ice islands totaling 20 square kilometers. The children, assembled as *The Young Ambassadors of the Arctic*, are part of the Global Green USA and Green Cross Pax Arctica '08 expedition.

"Our objective was to observe the state of the Ward Hunt ice shelf" said Sebastian Copeland, co-leader of the expedition and Global Green USA board member. "Nothing could have prepared us for the extent of our findings. After a 4-hour hike in slushy ice, we stumbled upon a major break in the shelf. It was so large that we could not have imagined the crack to be in fact developing before our very eyes. We were essentially the first to witness this dramatic development from up close."

"We were on the island for hands-on facts gathering in connection with Dr. Derek Mueller, a polar scientist at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. We were incredibly fortunate to be there as the ice shelf was calving," said Luc Hardy, co-leader of the expedition, who is sharing with Dr. Mueller videos, photographs and GPS coordinates of ice conditions and new cracks.

This new development is another threat to the Ward Hunt ice shelf, the largest, oldest and thickest remaining ice shelf in the Arctic." – "in a way, the fissures on the ice shelf are the fault lines of global warming." added Hardy.

According to Dr. Mueller, the first to report the cracking of the Ward Hunt ice shelf in 2002, what was witnessed is the consequence of gradually warming temperatures, especially in the North: *"This ice shelf has become destabilized with cracks over the past 6 years and recent open water conditions to the north of the ice shelf have facilitated the latest break off. The observations made by the Pax Arctica team will help pin down exactly when the calving took place"*

In addition to exploring ice cracks, the Pax Arctica team visited sites in Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Resolute Bay, Somerset Island, Otto Fjord and Radstock Bay. Their

mission was to interact with local culture, scientists conducting field studies, and to experience the Arctic environment as the eyes of their generation. The children, ages 9 to 17 and representing France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, the US and Nunavut (Canada) were selected to serve as “*The Young Ambassadors of the Arctic*” to observe the impact of climate change on the Arctic and take the message back to their communities and future generations. Their experience will be assembled into a documentary and a book.

Pax Arctica is a multi-year mission to study and educate the public about the effects of climate change to the Arctic. Pax Arctica is a joint effort by Global Green USA, Green Cross France (members of Green Cross International, the environmental organization founded by Mikhail Gorbachev) and Sagax Expeditions.

This initiative was sponsored in part by HP, the clothing brand Napapijri and Groupe UFG.

You can find out more about Pax Arctica by visiting:

www.paxarctica.org<<http://www.paxarctica.org>>

and

<http://expressioncenter.wetpaint.com/page/Team+Leaders?t=anon>

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