



Himalayan Expedition to Record Climate Change Effects

Geneva, 14 August -- In partnership with Green Cross International, the “Pax Arctica —Himalayas Expedition 2009” will help record changes in the Himalayan glaciers that feed seven of Asia's greatest rivers. The Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze and Huanghe supply water to about 40 per cent of the world’s population.

Pax Arctica is an environmental initiative founded by veteran adventurer Luc Hardy to protect the Arctic. He is famous for his earlier expeditions to Antarctica in 2003 and then to Greenland in 2007 and to Ward Hunt Island in 2008. The Himalayan expedition from 15-30 August will lead a team of Young Ambassadors to Nepal to witness changes in lakes and glaciers in the Hinku region, just south of Mt. Everest.

“Our objectives include raising awareness about the impact of climate change and its human impact on the local population,” said Luc Hardy, also a member of the Board of Green Cross France. “We also want to put a particular emphasis on the natural beauty of Nepal & its mountains and the need to preserve it for future generations.”

The glaciers of the Himalayas store more ice than anywhere on Earth except for the polar regions and Alaska. But they are receding 10-15 m per year on average - the rate is accelerating as global warming increases. This is faster than in any other part of the world and, if the present rate continues, the likelihood of them disappearing by the year 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high if the Earth keeps getting warmer at the current rate.

The rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers will first increase the volume of water in rivers causing widespread flooding. But in a few decades this situation will change and the water levels in rivers will decline, meaning massive economic and environmental problems for people in western China, Nepal and Northern India as they face water shortages.

The Pax Arctica — Himalayas expedition is under the patronage of the government of Nepal and is made in collaboration with IRD—LTHE (L'Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD) - Laboratoire d'étude des Transferts en Hydrologie et Environnement (LTHE)) - Laboratoire de Glaciologie et Géophysique de l'Environnement (LGGE-Grenoble) (Glaciologists Patrick Wagnon and Yves Arnaud – and Hydrologist, Pierre Chevallier) and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) - Kathmandu University –Nepal (Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha and Dr. Om Baratcharya). The corporate partners include UFG, Y&R, Tag Heuer, and SIGG among others.

Findings from the Himalayan expedition, including pictures of glaciers and lakes, will form part of the inputs to the Climate conference in Copenhagen later this year.

Contact: Someshwar Singh +4122 789 0816 or someshwar.singh@gci.ch

For more information on Pax Arctica and the expedition, please go to:

<http://paxarctica.org/>

<http://www.sagaxexpeditions.com/2US - 16 - Sagax The Pax Arctica Himalayas 2009.html>