

Environmental leaders and champions gather in Singapore for the B4E Global Summit 2008 in a coalition against climate change

-- More than 500 speakers, delegates and attendees from over 30 countries represented at the B4E Global Summit 2008

-- "Caring for Climate" engagement platform now endorsed by 217 businesses

Singapore, 23 April 2008 – More than 500 government, NGO and business leaders and press from about 30 countries attended the second B4E - Business for the Environment Global Summit in Singapore. Jointly hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Global Compact, the event was held at the Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre from 22 to 23 April 2008. The two-day summit addressed how corporate citizens can advance business-driven, pro-environment strategies that will also have a positive impact on their bottom line.

“One of the central achievements from the recently concluded COP 13 Bali talks was that both developed and developing countries acknowledged that climate change is everyone’s challenges and everyone’s opportunity. The B4E Global Summit 2008 in Singapore marks another milestone in our effort to assemble a coalition of public and private organisations from Asia and across the world that are determined to realise tomorrow’s economy today,” said Mr. Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNEP.

Highlights of the B4E Summit included the launch of the UNEP study on transboundary movement in ozone depleting chemicals, highlighting the prevalence of illegal trade in chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the Asia Pacific, the release of a new book by the President of the Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, titled ‘Paradise Drowning’, and a new report on biodiversity, titled, ‘Sustaining Life’, published by Oxford University Press, supported by UNEP; the Secretariat of the CBD; the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and IUCN.

“Habitat loss, destruction and degradation of ecosystems, pollution, over-exploitation and climate change are among the powerful and persistent impacts that are running down the planet’s nature-based capital, including the medical treasure trove of the world’s biodiversity”, said Mr. Steiner on the ‘Sustaining Life’ report. “This book explores seven threatened groups of organisms valuable to medicine which we may lose many of the land and marine-based life forms of economic and medical interest before we can learn their secrets, or, in some cases, before we know they exist.”

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High-level roundtable discussions were conducted at this year's Summit with UNEP Champions of the Earth laureates on the topic of advancing the climate agenda through policy, mitigation and adaptation, while industry-specific tracks discussed the concrete value that businesses can realise by financing and investing in climate-friendly production; policy tools and market instruments that can be used in sustainable building and construction; and how climate change can be tackled through information communication and technology.

Opened by Mr. Mah Bow Tan, the Singapore Minister for National Development, the event saw keynote speeches by luminaries like His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives; Mr. Adam Werbach, CEO, Act Now and Board Member Greenpeace International; and Mr. Zhang Yue, Chairman and CEO, BROAD Group, China. Other delegates and panellists included Mr. Adrian Hodges, Managing Director, International Business Leaders Forum; Mr. Aron Cramer, President and CEO, Business for Social Responsibility; Ms. Sheri Liao, President, Global Village of Beijing; Hon. Göran Persson, former Prime Minister, Sweden; and Mr. Ashok Khosla, Chairman, Development Alternatives Group. Corporations represented at the Summit included, Dell, Standard Chartered, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Suzlon Energy, Senoko Power, Lafarge, DHL Neutral Services, and China Mobile.

Additionally, in a signing ceremony as part of the summit, 15 Singapore-based companies pledged their support for the UN Global Compact. Another 11 companies from Singapore affirmed their commitment to the "Caring for Climate" programme, including Senoko Power, OCBC, NatSteel Asia, City Development Limited, Standard Chartered Bank, ABN AMRO, STMicroelectronics Asia Pacific, Keppel Land, Tolaram Corporation, Prosafe Production Services and Philips Electronics. Major signatories from other parts of the world that endorsed "Caring for Climate" ahead of the B4E Summit were China Mobile, ONCG, Tata Steel, Copagas and Union Fenosa.

B4E is an important platform for policy makers, business and civil society to come together and build strong, lasting partnerships to tackle global challenges," said Georg Kell, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact. "It is an appropriate forum to highlight "Caring for Climate", our global engagement platform and call to action, which has now been endorsed by more than 200 companies from around the world. These companies are not merely discussing the need for action against climate change. Instead, they have committed to measuring, tracking and communicating their progress in incorporating sustainability principles into business practices, and ensuring transparency and unbiased dialogue with stakeholders."

As part of its on-going commitment to be an environmental leader in the MICE industry, Global Initiatives, the official organisers of the B4E Global Summit 2008, maintained the green focus of the event by issuing press attendees with virtual press kits on thumb-drives and using recycled paper or paper obtained from certified sustainable managed plantations. It also used a fleet of 15 Honda Civic Hybrid cars for the transportation of VIPs and speakers. At the event venue at Suntec City Convention Centre, various green initiatives were also undertaken to encourage the use of recycled or reused materials, sustainably produced, organic or fair trade produce and the overall reduction in the use of paper and other materials.

The B4E Global Summit 2008 was supported by Business for Social Responsibility; strategic partner Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Limited (APRIL); corporate partners, Arcelor Mittal, The Dow Chemical Company, and OSRAM; and Singapore government partners Ministry of Environment & Water Resources and the Singapore Tourism Board. The event's international public relations partner is Edelman, and its global media partners are CNN and TIME.

More information on the B4E Global Summit agenda, speakers, topics and registration is available at www.B4Esummit.com.

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About United Nations Environment Programme (www.unep.org)

Established in 1972, UNEP is the recognised authority of the United Nations system in environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. Together with the World Meteorological Organisation of the United Nations, UNEP also established the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize 2007.

About the United Nations Global Compact (www.unglobalcompact.org)

Launched in 2000, the UN Global Compact brings business together with UN agencies, labour, civil society and governments to advance ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Through the power of collective action, the Global Compact seeks to mainstream these ten principles in business activities around the world and to catalyse actions in support of broader UN goals. With nearly 4,000 participating companies and hundreds of other stakeholders from more than 120 countries, it is the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative.