



GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Environment
Joshua Hassan House
Secretary's Lane
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

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World Environment Day 2007

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on the 5th June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates environmental awareness and enhances political attention and action. It was established by the United Nations General assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

Following the success of previous World Environment Days, the Department of the Environment is for a third year running taking part in the world-wide environmental initiative under the umbrella of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Previous initiatives have focussed on contemporary issues such as recycling and the decline of biodiversity. This year's theme is perhaps the most contested environmental issue to date: climate change, under the theme, "Melting Ice: A Hot Topic!" The most dramatic evidence of climate change is found in the Polar Regions. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the global average. The extent and thickness of permanent Arctic ice is diminishing; areas of permafrost, frozen for centuries, are thawing, and ice caps in Greenland and the Antarctic are melting faster than anyone anticipated.

Rising global temperatures are predicted to bring about changes to our climate, some of which could be felt locally. Awareness initiatives such as World Environment Day subsequently play a significant role in the wider Government blueprint to tackle climate change in Gibraltar.

The Department of the Environment has prepared a full program of events that will take place at the John Mackintosh Hall, which will include a series of talks on the implications of climate change at a global and regional level. Local schools will also be involved on the day presenting a variety of song and dance performances.

As a lead up to World Environment Day the Department of the Environment will also be hosting a trade fair on Saturday 2nd June at Casemates Square commencing at 10.00 am. Numerous organisations will be present on the day displaying environmental products or information. Amongst the items on display will be hybrid cars and eco-friendly bikes. All members of the public are most welcomed to attend the trade fair.

The Minister for the Environment the Hon J J Netto said that World Environment Day 2007 concentrates on one of the most difficult challenges facing people and ecosystems, as a result of rapid environmental and climatic change. Today's melting ice – affects people's lives all over the world, whether this be in the form of sea level

rise, land erosion, drought, floods, storms or other threats to livelihoods and lifestyles. We need to remind ourselves that a healthy and stable environment and a rich natural resource base are essential for human welfare, development and security. I would therefore, urge the public at large to join forces with us, in order to make a difference for the better of the planet.