



UNEP DATA GOES LIVE WITH BELLA GAIA FILM AND PERFORMANCE AT WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Washington, D.C./Portland, Oregon, June 3, 2013 – On the occasion of World Environment Day (WED), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and BELLA GAIA are launching in Portland, Oregon, a short film titled *Hotspots to Hopespots* – a multimedia presentation of scientific data and images on the planet’s changing environment.

Directed by award winning filmmaker, music producer and classically trained violinist, Kenji Williams, the film highlights this year’s WED theme of food waste and showcases visualizations of Hotspots that have turned into Hopespots. These images are available on the UNEP Live portal, which is based on research led by UNEP’s Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA). The film, which also features data produced by NASA, BELLA GAIA and the Brooklyn-based data visualization company, Culture Shock, illustrates earth science stories from around the globe. The partners worked together to show real time anthropogenic activity spanning decades.

Hotspots to Hopespots will premiere at Portland State University’s Native American Student Community Center at 6:30 p.m. on 4 June, and will be accompanied by a musical performance (synchronized to the film) by Kenji Williams, Director of BELLA GAIA.

Hotspots harbor great diversity of species, land and sea and are significantly impacted by human activities. Hopespots, born from Hotspots, are deemed critical to the health of ecosystems, animals and people.

The BELLA GAIA and UNEP collaboration, made possible in part with support from The Baum Foundation, is a way of showcasing the work undertaken by UNEP, including the series of atlases of our changing environment. These publications present visual and factual data, as well as analyses of humanity's impact on the environment.

The film tells many stories by using actual satellite data, visualizations of Hotspots, emissions by country, and environmental changes taking place over short time frames. The 'before' and 'after' images, some of which span a 35-year period, offer striking snapshots of local ecosystem transformation.

One *Hotspots to Hopespots* visualization demonstrates how rainwater conservation in Kenya over time is improving food security in drought-prone regions via increased irrigation projects.

“The data and the topics we have selected for this multimedia experience weave together a compelling story that illustrates anthropogenic change on planet Earth, but also hopeful

signs of change,” says Williams. “Through BELLA GAIA’s method of artistically translating data, I hope to move people and inspire action that will help us find solutions that will make our future more sustainable”, he added.

“The images show both the positive and negative impacts of human life on Earth. We hope they will provide food for thought, as we seek ways to balance our use of the Earth’s resources, says Ashbindu Singh, Director of UNEP DEWA’s North American office”.

To view the video, visit: <http://vimeo.com/67499493>

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Note to Editors

June 5 - The *Hotspots to Hopespots* film and performance will be featured on June 5 at a Youth Workshop led by Dr. Mae Jemison – the first African-American female astronaut. This event, which will take place at Roosevelt High School in Portland, is sponsored by Bayer Corporation’s Making Science Make Sense program and is part of Bayer’s annual sponsorship of the World Environment Day Youth Programs. Time: 2:45 p.m.; location: 6941 N Central Street, Portland, Oregon 97203.

June 6 – The *Hotspots to Hopespots* film and performance will also be the highlight of the official World Environment Day closing event Innovation Celebration hosted by the City of Portland and featuring some of the most innovative technology solutions by inventors and businesses throughout the State of Oregon. Date: June 6th at 6 p.m.; location: World Trade Center Portland, 121 SW Salmon St, 2WTC, Portland, Oregon 97204

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP is the leading authority on the environment within the United Nations system. The mission of UNEP’s Regional Office for North America (RONA) is to build support in the region for UNEP’s work, promote effective responses to international environmental challenges and to foster cooperation on environmental issues between North America and the broader international community. To achieve this mission, RONA’s strategy is to promote collaboration between UNEP and all sectors of North American society, including U.S. and Canadian governmental institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society groups.

Kenji Williams, Director and Composer of Bella Gaia

Kenji Williams is an award winning filmmaker, music producer and classically trained violinist. Bridging music, visual arts, science and storytelling, Williams collaborates with institutions such as NASA, the United Nations, and the Smithsonian on live, multimedia projection performances.

For more information on:

UNEP Live, visit: www.uneplive.org

Bella Gaia, visit: www.bellagaia.com

World Environment Day in Portland, visit: www.portlandoregon.gov/wed/

World Environment Day around the world, visit: www.unep.org/wed/about/

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