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Green Cross, Armani water campaign expanding in Africa, Latin America and Asia to reach more people with safe water

1 March, 2012/Geneva – Green Cross and Giorgio Armani are launching a new global campaign aimed at providing thousands of people in Africa, Latin America and Asia with safe drinking water.

Armani's Acqua for Life Challenge 2012 campaign will raise funds through the sale of perfumes and an online Facebook drive to install water supply systems in communities in Ghana, Bolivia and China through the Green Cross Smart Water for Green Schools project.

"The Smart Water for Green Schools project is going from strength to strength. Today, we are active in three continents and our aim is to reach more communities – particularly children – with safe drinking water," says Green Cross International President Alexander Likhotal.

The Challenge is being launched in response to the world's water and sanitation crisis. Almost 900 million people lack clean sources of drinking water – over a third of which live in Sub-Saharan Africa - and 2.6 billion have no access to adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities. Globally, diarrhoea is the leading cause of illness and death, and 88% of diarrhoeal deaths are due to a lack of access to sanitation facilities, low availability of water for hygiene and unsafe drinking water.

Green Cross launched its Smart Water for Green Schools project in 2010 in Ghana, where 40% of its rural population has no safe water to drink. Green Cross later expanded to Bolivia, where it has been providing water to people in the Vallegrande and Gutierrez municipalities in the Santa Cruz region.

Thanks to the support of Armani's Acqua for Life Challenge, Green Cross has been able to expand its Smart Water for Green Schools activities even further. The 2012 Acqua for Life Challenge is the second edition of the Armani campaign. The 2011 Challenge raised proceeds that provided approximately 43 million litres of water per year to about 27,000 people in 16 Ghanaian communities.

Access to safe drinking water in these Ghanaian towns and villages had been limited, or non-existent, until proceeds from the Challenge helped install rainwater harvesting systems, wells, bore holes and pumps.

While in 2011 the Armani fund-raising drive focused only on Ghana, this year's Challenge will help Green Cross establish water systems for the first time in Bolivia's Charagua area of the Santa Cruz region and China's village of Heinigou in Yunnan Province. Notably, the work in

China marks the first time Green Cross has taken its Smart Water for Green Schools activities into Asia.

“Water is the most essential element to support life,” says Marie-Laure Vercambre, Green Cross International’s Water for Life and Peace programme director. “Our work with Smart Water for Green Schools, and the support from Giorgio Armani, allows tens of thousands of people to have sustainable supplies of safe drinking water in their communities.”

Green Cross and its founding president, Mikhail Gorbachev, have long advocated for universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, which the United Nations recognized in 2010 as a basic human right.

“People can live a long time without bread, but without water we cannot live at all,” said Mr Gorbachev. “We need it at all costs.”

Green Cross International, founded in 1993, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of advocacy and on-the-ground projects. GCI is headquartered in Geneva and is present in over 30 countries.

Related materials:

- Smart Water for Green Schools [background document](#)
- Video interview: [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) on the importance of water
- Acqua for Life Challenge [online](#)

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