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| **MEDIA RELEASE** | **EMBARGOED TO FRIDAY 17 JANUARY 2014** |

**Progressive cities forge path
toward renewable future**

**Gland, Switzerland –** Cities around the globe have received special recognition by WWF for impressive actions on climate change.

Thirty-four finalists from 14 participating countries were selected from among the 163 entrants in this year’s Earth Hour City Challenge (EHCC). An expert jury will now review the actions and commitments reported by these cities and ultimately identify one sustainability leader per country for the National Earth Hour Capital Awards to be presented on 27 March in Vancouver, Canada.

The EHCC project aims to mobilize action and support from cities in the global transition towards a sustainable future powered by renewable energy.

“It’s very inspiring to see the increasing number of cities striving to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and making great strides in the transition towards a renewable energy future”, says Carina Borgström-Hansson, PhD, Lead for WWF’s Earth Hour City Challenge.

“Despite their commendable efforts, cities can’t do it alone. If we are to protect the world from dangerous climate change while meeting human needs, a radical shift in investment must take place. In addition to local governments, national policy-makers, businesses and major financial institutions must be a part of this transition”, says Borgström-Hansson.

WWF has worked closely with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, in mobilizing cities to join the challenge and enabling their reporting through carbon*n* Cities Climate Registry (cCCR).

“As a Main Partner, ICLEI is proud to support WWF’s Earth Hour City Challenge as it grows to become an essential global initiative for rewarding cities’ sustainability achievements through the active participation of our Member Cities, Regional Offices and through our global reporting platform, carbon*n* Cities Climate Registry,” says Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI.

These 34 cities are considered contenders for the title Earth Hour Capital 2014 for having demonstrated a sincere commitment to the creation of sustainable cities:

**Belgium:** Antwerp, Brussels Capital Region, Ghent

**Brazil:** Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo

**Canada:** Edmonton, North Vancouver, Surrey

**Colombia:** Medellín, Monteria

**Denmark:** Copenhagen

**Finland:** Lappeenranta

**India:** Cochin, Coimbatore, Hyderabad

**Indonesia**: Semarang, Bogor

**Mexico**: Mexico City, Municipality of Aguascalientes, Puebla

**South Africa:** Cape Town, Durban

**South Korea:** Seoul, Suwon

**Sweden:** Eskilstuna, Stockholm, Växjö

**Thailand**: Khunhan, Muangklang, Nongsamrong

**USA:** Boulder, Chicago, Cleveland

**We Love Cities**

WWF encourages people all over the world to show their support for the impressive efforts that cities are making towards sustainability, and to participate in the [**We Love Cities**](http://www.welovecities.org) campaign, which goes live today. Web visitors are invited to vote for their favorites among the 34 finalist cities, and to share the favorite aspects of these cities via photos and videos. Visitors are also welcome to submit suggestions for how the cities can become even more sustainable.

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to Editors**

**\*Earth Hour City Challenge Jury**

* **Gino van Begin**, Secretary General of ICLEI
* **Martha Delgado**, General Director of the Secretariat of the Global Cities Covenant on Climate
* **Christiana Figueres**, UNFCCC Executive Secretary
* **Simon Giles**, Senior Principal Intelligent Cities, Accenture Global, Accenture
* **Dan Hoornweg**, Professor and Jeff Boyce Research Chair, Faculty of Energy Systems and Engineering, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
* **Pietro Laureano**, architect and urban planner, UNESCO consultant
* **Conor Riffle**, Head of CDP Cities
* **Aromar Revi**, Director, Indian Institute of Human Settlements
* **John F. Cook**, Executive Director, US-Mexico Border Mayors Association
* **Alexandre Meira da Rosa**, Manager of Infrastructure and Environment Sector, Inter-American Development Bank
* **Gil-hong Kim**, Director Sustainable Infrastructure Division, Asian Development Bank
* **Seth Schulz**, Director Research, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

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**About WWF**

WWF is one of the world’s largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost five million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the earth’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

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