



Press release

Danone, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature: A breakthrough program to restore biodiversity and fight global warming

Changwon, Republic of Korea, October 29, 2008 – During the 10th meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands' Conference of Contracting Parties, presently under way in the Republic of Korea, an original and ambitious partnership agreement aimed at fighting global warming has been entered into by the Ramsar Convention, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Danone Group.

Fighting global warming through wetlands protection and restoration

The purpose of this innovative program is to capitalize on the essential role played by wetlands ecosystems, especially mangrove swamps, in carbon capture. Representing 6% of land area, wetlands fix 20% of the earth's carbon and produce 25% of the world's foods (fisheries, agriculture and hunting). These areas, vital to biodiversity and the survival of many populations also enable the natural purification of freshwater and groundwater's recharge, and serve as effective barriers against coastal storms. Nearly half of these areas, however, have been destroyed over the past century.

The agreement signed today is in many ways a concrete response to the call that went out last July to the international community from 700 scientists of the International Association for Ecology (INTECOL), emphasizing the global importance of wetlands conservation.

After a ten years partnership with Ramsar, a new stage in Danone's commitment to environmental responsibility

For Danone, the first steps taken under this program will be led by Evian. As the world's leading brand of mineral water, Evian has a long experience in protecting water resources, particularly through the protection of the catchment zone that feeds its own spring. In addition, the brand has worked for many years to reduce its environmental impact in the areas of energy consumption, packaging and transportation. As a result, between 2000 and 2011 Evian will have shrunk its carbon footprint by half.

As no human activity can claim in itself environmental neutrality, Evian simultaneously intends to develop voluntary initiatives making it possible to absorb the remainder of its carbon footprint. From 2009, as part of the partnership announced today, Evian will support specific programs to store carbon, by restoring wetlands with Ramsar and the IUCN.

This twin effort—to reduce emissions on its own and to restore areas that will fix large quantities of CO₂—will enable Evian to become carbon neutral, from 2011 onward.

An agreement leading to the creation of a Danone Fund for Nature

In concrete terms, Danone's commitment will take the form of a fund. The mission of the Danone Fund for Nature is to support projects that combine water resources management, the conservation of biodiversity, quality improvements in food resources emanating from wetlands and the strengthening of their natural capacity for storing large quantities of CO₂.

Administered by the three partners, this Fund will rely scientifically and technically on Ramsar and the IUCN.

The first pilot project will be implemented in 2009, followed by a larger scale roll-out, and tracked by reliable and recognized measurement methods.

“The Danone Group and Evian have been working with us for ten years,” said Anada Tiega, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention. “What makes our partnership work is that we share the same goal of protecting water resources. We are delighted to reach a new level with Danone and Evian alongside IUCN with even more ambitious goals.”

“This project fits perfectly into the IUCN’s mission of promoting biodiversity as a fundamental prerequisite for ecosystems to be able to support the fight against climate change and poverty,” observed Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN Director General. IUCN will leverage its network and expertise in providing the program’s technical and operational co-ordination.”

“We’re glad we’ve been able to answer the appeal made by the Ramsar Convention and IUCN, and to do so through an original and promising partnership,” added Franck Riboud, Chairman and CEO of Danone, “What this means is putting in place the financial, technical and human resources required for rehabilitating ecosystems where we can fix a portion of our carbon footprint. The wetlands restoration program, with the fixation potential that it represents and its fit with Evian’s vocation and long-term commitment, is a natural complement to our ongoing efforts to reduce our corporate environmental impact.”

About the Ramsar Convention

The international Wetlands Convention signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 under the sponsorship of UNESCO is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for actions by nations and for international cooperation to conserve and make considered use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention presently has 158 signatories, who have placed 1,820 wetland areas totalling 168 million hectares on the List of internationally significant wetlands.

For more information visit: www.ramsar.org

About IUCN

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the oldest and largest international network in the environmental movement. It includes over a thousand members (countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations and nearly 11,000 volunteer experts from 160 countries.

The IUCN’s work is carried out by a staff of over 1,000 professionals working in 62 national and regional offices. IUCN headquarters are located near Geneva, Switzerland.

For more information visit: www.iucn.org

About Danone and Evian

The mission of the Danone Group is to provide health through healthful eating to the most people it can. With 150 manufacturing sites and about 76,000 employees, Danone is a health foods leader. The Danone Group is included in the main social responsibility indexes—the Stoxx and the World Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, the Eurozone ASPI and the Ethibel Sustainability Index.

For more information visit: www.danone.com

The Evian brand can be found on five continents and in over 120 countries. Its balanced mineral composition results from being filtered for over 15 years in the heart of the French Alps. At the end of this journey, Evian natural mineral water emerges in the Cachat Spring in the French town of Evian-les-Bains on the shore of Lake Geneva. Evian has a long-standing commitment to lowering its environmental impact. It has reduced the weight of its bottles by 20% over the past ten years, makes its bottles from 25% recycled PET and in Europe takes two-thirds of its production to market by train.

For more information visit: www.evian.com

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