



## Thousands of teachers and students act locally and globally for forests in Finland

Environment Online (ENO) is a global virtual school and network for sustainable development. The ENO Programme Association will organize a conference called Act Now! Forests for Future on 13-17 September 2011. This first of the biannual conferences will take place in Joensuu, Finland, and it is featured as one of the key events for the **International Year of Forests by the United Nations**. The patron for the conference is **Dr Jane Goodall**. Over 600 teachers and pupils from 70 countries and every continent have registered for this event. Most of the participants come from the developing countries.

The main event at Joensuu Arena on 15-16 September will showcase the World of Forests. 7,000 visitors are expected to take part in the event and follow hands-on workshops, panel discussion and other activities focusing on forests and their importance. Still more people will attend through the internet as the event will be streamed **live on the web** for those who cannot come. Following the ideology of the ENO Programme, the conference connects different fields of society for a common goal, as partners from the private, public and third sectors will come together to share their expertise on forest-related work.

The conference will be organised simultaneously with another important event called *The Koli Forum*. This biannual Forum provides a forward-looking, informal discussion platform for European leaders to produce united views and proposals for the management of natural resources for the European Commission, the UN Climate Conference in South Africa 2011 and further for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro 2012.

In addition to **Dr Jane Goodall's** video message, **Dr Wangari Maathai** will send her message to Act Now! conference. The event will also be attended by international guests such as **Miss Earth Nicole Faria** and **Eduardo Rojas-Briales (FAO)**. Prior to the main event, ENO pupils will meet guests of Koli Forum and plant trees together on 14 September on the foothills of the Koli National Park. Ambassadors or representatives from about 20 countries are expected to join in the opening ceremonies on 15 September at Joensuu Arena. This event will be streamed **live on the web**.

ENO schools act for forests, and tree planting is the most popular activity. The first ENO trees were planted in 2004, and since then, about six million trees have been planted in total. For instance in Indonesia alone, over 3,500 schools have joined the ENO tree planting campaign. The target of ENO is to plant **100 million trees by 2017** when Finland will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To achieve this, national ENO coordinators in 134 countries have been preparing their strategies, and 50 coordinators from the developing countries will gather together with forestry experts in a **strategy symposium** at the ACT Now! conference. ENO pupils around the world have been preparing **ENO Action Plan** for forests and written stories for an online book called **Peace Forest**. Both will be published at the conference.

The message of the conference crystallizes in the conference song "Act Now". This song will be performed in the opening ceremonies on 15 September at Joensuu Arena. You can listen to it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXQIIAVS8j8>

More information:

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