

10 December 2008

By: Tudor Vieru, Science Editor



One billion people will use candles for light on March 28th, 2009
Flickr / rageforst

'Earth Hour' to Draw 1 Billion People in 2009

The action will take place March 28th

Earth Hour is an international direct action event where people from all around the world are asked to turn off their appliances, as well as their lights and everything electricity-consuming, for an hour. The initiative belongs to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and, thus far, more than 74 cities in 62 countries pledged to partake in the event. The goal of the manifestation is to make 1 billion people participate, so as to draw an important alarm signal for the world leaders, meeting in Copenhagen next December.

Director General of WWF International, Jim Leape, explains that "When leaders gather in Copenhagen in December 2009 to negotiate a new deal on climate they must feel that the eyes of the world are upon them. Earth Hour provides an opportunity for the public to send a powerful signal that they are watching and expect action."

Earth Hour Global Executive Director Andy Ridley adds that "2009 is the year we decide the future of the earth. It is the year when the world meets to agree on a plan to reduce carbon emissions across the globe. This is the time to invest in new ways of doing business in a new low carbon economy. We must all step over the line together if we are to succeed."

If WWF's plan succeeds, the world could see about 1,000 of its largest cities in total blackout for a full hour, as people will turn off all their electricity usage. The goal of the manifestation is to attract more public awareness on the fact that global warming is real, and that immediate steps are needed, if the problem is to be tackled successfully.

When the movement first sprung up, in 2007, some 2 million people in Sydney, including business managers, turned off their lights, in an attempt to let people know climate change was here. In 2008, more than 50 million people in 35 countries joined in, and hopes for the 28th of March, 2009, are high. One billion people is a very ambitious goal, but it's only through direct action that state representatives can be persuaded to take action at next year's climate talks.