



# Press Release

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***For further information, contact:***

Paul Fox, The Gillette Company, +1 (617) 421-7571  
Rosario Alvarez, The Nature Conservancy, +52 (55) 5661 1153  
Marco Lazcano, Amigos de Sian Ka'an, +52 (998) 8 80 60 24  
Katherine Dodson, The United Nations Foundation, +1 (202) 887-9040

***October 26, 2004***

***(Mexico City)*** The U.S. Embassy to Mexico today hosted a reception to launch the International Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (ICWRP) at the U.S. Trade Center in Mexico City. The ICWRP's first project will be the protection and restoration of the World Heritage site at the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Quintana Roo.

Alfredo Arellano, Regional Director for the Yucatan Peninsula from CONANP welcomed the establishment of this partnership in Mexico, stating, "corporations, foundations and conservation organizations working together with the public sector, enhances our ability to protect our invaluable natural heritage".

The new ICWRP partnership, under the founding sponsorship of The Gillette Company, has been established to protect, preserve and restore wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs, and similar resources in countries around the world. ICWRP operates by leveraging private sector contributions with existing international mechanisms, including the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. These funds are then contributed to existing projects in wetlands and other aquatic areas.

Michael Madnick, Vice President for Partnership Development of the United Nations Foundation, stated the importance of linking the public and private sectors in wetlands restoration and preservation: "ICWRP is a remarkable model of how to best bring the expertise and resources of local communities, responsible companies, and the international conservation community together to protect some of our world's most valuable treasures. Together, the partners are accomplishing more than any one could do on its own."

The first ICWRP project is currently commencing at the Sian Ka'an biosphere reserve in Quintana Roo. Working together through the ICWRP Partnership initiative, The Nature Conservancy, The Gillette Company and the United Nations Foundation are supporting efforts to conserve freshwater, marine and coastal resources in and around Sian Ka'an.

The Gillette Company's General Manager for Mexico and Central America, Alfredo Munda, expressed his enthusiasm for being the first corporation to participate in this initiative: "The Gillette Company is committed to supporting the communities in which we do business and we are clearly delighted to be

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working alongside the United Nations Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and Los Amigos De Sian Ka'an to help protect the remarkable Sian Ka'an region.

International environmental organizations such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are also participating in the ICWRP partnership. Rosario Alvarez, Mexico Program Country Director for TNC, expanded on the significance of partnering with the private sector: "The Nature Conservancy has a successful history of working with Mexican communities on projects that sustain our most precious natural resources. By partnering with corporations and foundations, we have additional capacity to preserve the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, an area of incredible ecological importance."

The Sian Ka'an project, being implemented by Mexican NGO Amigos de Sian Ka'an, seeks to promote the protection of critical coastal habitats and ensure the viability of the region's freshwater system. This will be accomplished through a number of activities including developing a conservation land buyer program targeting the coastal areas of the Sian Ka'an reserve, and acquiring a key tract of land, Pez Maya, that protects the only canal linking the coral reef to an extensive wetland system.

According to Marco Lazcano, Director of Amigos de Sian Ka'an, "this unique international partnership is an extraordinary opportunity to ensure the lasting conservation of Sian Ka'an's World Heritage site wetlands and coastal habitats, by working with landowners through private and public conservation partnerships and a common conservation vision. At the same time, natural resources conservation will provide local people with alternatives for their sustainable development".

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#### ***About the ICWRP Partners:***

Further information about ICWRP is available on the Partnership website: <http://www.icwrp.org>.

**The Gillette Company**, headquartered in Boston, Mass., is the world leader in male grooming, a category that includes blades, razors and shaving preparations. Gillette also holds the number one position worldwide in selected female grooming products, such as wet shaving products and hair epilation devices. In addition, the Company is the world leader in alkaline batteries and in manual and power toothbrushes.

**The Nature Conservancy** is a leading international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.

**The United Nations Foundation** was created in 1998 with businessman and philanthropist R.E. Turner's historic gift to support UN causes. The United Nations Foundation promotes a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world through the support of the United Nations and its Charter. Through its grant-making and by building new and innovative public-private partnerships, the United Nations Foundation

acts to meet the most pressing health, humanitarian, socioeconomic, and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

**Amigos de Sian Ka'an** is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation established in June 5 of 1986, by a group of scientists and conservationists. Amigos' mission is the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecological processes for the well-being of present and future generations. Amigos focuses its efforts within the state of Quintana Roo, in particular, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, as well as collaborates with regional and international partners throughout the Mesoamerican region.