



PRESS RELEASE

[Embargo : Monday, 8 May 2017, 06:00 hrs. CET](#)

Pioneering UN Backed, Citizen Led Alliance against Mosquito Borne Diseases Joins Global Fight to Save 2.7 Million Lives Every Year

Initiative Empowers National Networks, Stakeholders and Governments to Generate and Access Real-time Data and Tools through UN Electronic Platform ‘Environment Live’

Geneva, 8 May, 2017 – A new alliance of citizen-science organizations and UN Environment will be launched, Monday, in an effort to escalate the global fight against mosquito-borne diseases, responsible for killing close to 2.7 million people annually, mostly in Africa and Latin America. Overall mosquito borne cases are estimated at 500 million every year.

The new initiative, launched under the name ‘*Global Mosquito Alert*’, brings together thousands of scientists and volunteers from around the world to track and control mosquito borne viruses, including Zika, yellow fever, chikungunya, dengue, malaria and the West Nile virus. It is the first global platform dedicated to citizen science techniques to tackle the monitoring of mosquito populations.

The programme is expected to move forward as a collaboration involving the European, Australian and American Citizen Science Associations as well as the developing citizen science community in Southeast Asia.

Agreement to launch the initiative was reached at a two-day workshop that took place in Geneva earlier this month, organized by UN Environment, the Wilson Center’s Science and Technology Innovation Program (STIP), and the European Citizen Science Association (ECSA).

Director of Science at UN Environment, Jacqueline McGlade, said, “The Global Mosquito Alert will offer for the first time a shared platform to leverage citizen science for the global surveillance and control of disease-carrying mosquitos. It is a unique infrastructure that is open for all to use and may be augmented with modular components and implemented on a range of scales to meet local and global research and management needs.”

She added, “The programme will offer the benefit of the millions spent in developing existing mosquito monitoring projects to local citizen science groups around the world. Opportunities to keep these citizen-led initiatives at the cutting edge of science will now depend on securing major funding to support the ongoing programme development and its promotion to millions of people world-wide.”



The Global Mosquito Alert will be supported by a consortium of data and information providers, coordinated through *Environment Live*, the dynamic UN knowledge platform, designed to collect, process and share the world's best environmental science and research. Built and maintained by UN Environment, the platform provides real-time open data access to policy makers and the general public, using distributed networks, cloud computing, big data and improved search functions.

The consortium includes: Mosquito Alert, Spain; MosquitoWEB Portugal; Zanzamapp in Italy; Muggenradar in the Netherlands; the Globe Observer Mosquito Habitat Mapper, USA/International and the Invasive Mosquito Project USA.

The information displayed on Environment Live will allow managers to mitigate risk and reduce health threats while opening up an opportunity for concerned citizens to contribute their mosquito observations and possible solutions. Citizen data will augment information already available from Government public health sources.

The new consortium has agreed to share current approaches to monitor the spread of key mosquito species and their breeding sites, and to measure the nuisance value of the citizen mosquito experience to support health risk management. The group also agreed to pool knowledge and experience on citizen science programmes to monitor mosquito species using the latest DNA identification techniques.

-----END-----



Notes to Editors:

- The secretariat for the Global Mosquito Alert is held by **The European Citizen Science Association (ECSA)**: a non-profit association set up to encourage the growth of the Citizen Science movement in Europe, covering over 28 countries across the European Union and beyond. **If you wish to join the Initiative, please contact** : Soledad Luna, Coordinator, European Citizen Science Association (ECSA), Tel: +49 -30 - 2093 8776, E Mail - Soledad.Luna@mfn-berlin.de
- Other partners include:

The Wilson Centre's Science and Technology Innovation Program (STIP): The Wilson Center, chartered by the [US] Congress as the official memorial to President Woodrow Wilson, is the nation's [USA] key non-partisan policy forum for tackling global issues through independent research and open dialogue to inform actionable ideas for the policy community. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/about-the-wilson-center>

UN Environment is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

<http://web.unep.org/about/who-we-are/overview>

Environment Live provides UN Member States with open access to information and knowledge on the environment at the global, regional and national levels. It supports Environmental Policy through Foresight, Outlooks and Assessments and providing Capacity Building for countries to achieve the Goals of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development. Environment Live provides up-to-date information for citizen-science, communities of practice and impact stories and case-studies on the environment and people. <https://uneplive.unep.org/what>

The Globe Observer Mosquito Habitat Mapper is a NASA-sponsored project that is the result of the combined efforts of an extended team that includes the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES); NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, Langley Research Centre, and Jet Propulsion Laboratory; Space Science Applications, Inc. (SSAI); the GLOBE Implementation Office (GIO), GLOBE DIS and Brooklyn College. It is part of the Mosquito Challenge Community Campaign (MCCC) focused on demonstrating the usefulness of citizen science data for combatting Zika in Brazil and Peru. For more information contact - rusty_low@strategies.org

The Invasive mosquito project is a classroom based citizen science project that links educators and citizen scientists with local expertise to monitor mosquitos using do-it-yourself oviposition traps. The project aims to educate kids (kindergarten through high school) about their role in protecting oneself, their family, and their pets from mosquito-borne diseases. The website contains lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, quizzes, and basic information for teachers. For more information contact: <http://www.citizenscience.us>

Muggenradar (Mosquito Radar) is the first community-based project for collecting information about mosquito activity and biting nuisance in the Netherlands. Muggenradar is a surveillance instrument



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

initially launched to investigate mosquito activity during winter. The public are encouraged to submit data, photographs and mosquito specimens for identification. <http://www.muggenradar.nl>

Mosquito Alert is a citizen science platform based in Spain with the aim of uniting citizens, scientists and public health managers in the fight against mosquito-borne diseases. With the Mosquito Alert app anyone can report tiger mosquitos (*Aedes albopictus*), yellow fever mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*), and their breeding sites. Reports are validated by a team of entomologists and information is passed in real-time to relevant public health agencies as well as the public in general. <http://www.mosquitoalert.com/en/project/>

ZanzaMapp – Sapienza Università Di Roma – is a citizen science platform that allows citizens to report the presence of mosquitoes and check real time information on mosquito presence and activity. It helps institutions, government bodies and universities to work together on controlling mosquitos. <http://www.zanzamapp.it/>

MosquitoWEB — Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical – is a community-based monitoring program focused on the early detection of invasive mosquito species (e.g. *Aedes albopictus* and *Ae. aegypti*) in Portugal, as well as on the update of native species' distribution and activity. <http://www.mosquitoweb.pt>

CitizenScience.Asia - brings together Citizen Science projects and practitioners in Hong Kong and across Asia. The goal of the community is to promote the concept of citizen science and to facilitate dialogues between researchers, citizens and communicators across different projects in the region. Participating projects include DIYbio Hong Kong and their Hong Kong Barcode project, the crowd-funded BauhiniaGenome project, and the Hong Kong participants in the Mosquito Alert project. For more information, please contact - citsci@s01ut10n.com

For more information, please contact: Shereen Zorba, Head, Science-Policy Outreach and Knowledge Networks, UN Environment, shereen.zorba@unep.org, Cel/whatsapp: +254 788 526000 , Skype: shereen.zorba