

Press release – Draft

For immediate release

Polar Bears on Thin Ice:

An ecological and artistic collaboration between Inuit, Canadians and British people

Copenhagen, December 13, 2009 – The *Polar Bears on thin ice* campaign is now opening at the World Summit in Copenhagen. “This artistic project’s aim is to rally the youth and Canadians in general to the urgency of taking action against global warming and the dangers confronting the Northern populations”, explains Rita Novalinga, General Manager of the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec which serves fourteen member cooperatives in Nunavik, Québec. “The Arctic Ocean is the most affected by the melting of the ice cap due to climate change. This brings radical changes to the Inuit traditional ways of life of hunting and fishing, and they are becoming more dependent on food imported from the South. We must act now!”, adds Janice Grey, the Inuit representative in Copenhagen.

Under the direction of the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, Hôtel de Glace and Équiterre, the *Polar Bears on Thin Ice* campaign will be a two-phase project. The first part will consist in bringing to Canada a very special bear, the third of its kind worldwide. It is a bear carved in ice by Peter Boy, an Inuk carver, on top of a bronze skeleton made by Mark Coreth, a British artist. This ice carving will be exhibited in front of the Quebec Parliament during the Quebec Winter Carnival at the end of January, 2010. The ice carving will then be shipped to Ottawa in February for the Winterlude celebration.

“Équiterre is pleased to participate in this wonderful project which was inspired from the *Ice Bear Project* by the British artist Mark Coreth. His ice polar bears are on exhibition in downtown Copenhagen, where I find myself today, and on Trafalgar Square in London”, explains Sidney Ribaux, General Coordinator of Équiterre. “These bears are an image of global warming and they are melting due to the ambient temperature and because people can touch them. As in the case of the arctic ice, we don’t know how long it will take before the bears are completely melted”, says Mark Coreth.

Tomorrow, the artisans from the Hôtel de Glace, a project participant, will proceed with forming the ice around the bear skeleton. “We intend to put all our expertise into this inspiring project which wholly corresponds to our values and desire to protect the environment”, says Jacques Desbois, President and CEO of Hôtel de Glace.

The second part of the *Polar Bears on Thin Ice* campaign will address 9 to 12 year-olds and will propose ways for them to reflect on climate change, and means to individual and collective action. For example, a contest titled “*Letters to the Polar Bear*” which began December 1st, 2009, asks them to write about their understanding of climate change and the possible solutions. They are also asked to indicate what measures they take themselves to reduce their own energy consumption. The three most committed letter writers will win a 3-day trip to Nunavik. In addition to this contest, ice carving and snow activities in school yards will be suggested as an accompaniment to the Ice Polar Bear throughout its journey.

The project organizers would like to thank the Cooperators Group and the Fonds d’action québécois pour le développement durable (FAQDD) and its main partner, the Quebec government through the Climate Action Network program, for their financial contributions. They also thank the project participants, Fondation Monique Fitz-Back, Établissements Verts Bruntland and Ma Rue Verte.

Équiterre

Équiterre's mission is to empower citizens, organizations and governments to make environmentally sound and socially responsible choices.

Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ)

FCNQ is owned by its fourteen member co-ops in the Inuit communities of the Hudson Bay and Ungava coasts of Northern Quebec, or Nunavik, as this region is now called. FCNQ was established in 1967 to provide the rapidly growing cooperative movement with more effective powers and services to help attain their vision – Atautsikut/Together– working to develop as a people, leaving none behind.

Hôtel de Glace

The Hôtel de Glace will bring technical and financial support to the project. The Hôtel de Glace is a nordic event that brings to life a one-of-a-kind experience combining fun and learning, with a focus on the magic of nature and the great outdoors.

You may obtain the French version of Ice Bear Project at: <http://bit.ly/8o9m6l>

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