SANDWATCH INTERNATIONAL DATABASE LAUNCHED

The Sandwatch International Database was launched in Mauritius on 20th March 2013 at an Experts Meeting on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Africa supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Republic of Mauritius.

The database will provide participating Sandwatch groups the opportunity to upload their monitoring data to a secure site. Not only will this allow for proper archiving of environmental data, but it will also allow users to analyse their results, create their own charts and graphs, and communicate their findings visually with the wider community. Non-Sandwatch groups can also visit the site and view the data.

Launched in 1999, Sandwatch is a volunteer network of children, youth and adults working together to monitor and analyse changes in their beach environment using a standardized approach, share their findings with the wider community and then take action to address issues. In so doing, Sandwatch practitioners enhance their beach environment and help build its resilience to climate change.

The database can be accessed through **https://sandwatchdb.org/beachdata** and a user name and password can be obtained by sending a request to **sandwatchdatabase@gmail.com**.

At the launch in Mauritius, Gillian Cambers, Co-Director of the Sandwatch Foundation described how Sandwatch is an example of education for sustainable development in action providing opportunities for students, teachers and communities to learn about changes in their beach environments and in so doing to enhance the beach and make it more resilient to climate change. Moreover "It is an opportunity to make science fun!"

Dave Gray, a software designer from Canada who voluntarily designed the database, demonstrated some of its features including the built-in mapping function and the facility to upload and share images as well as data, text and figures in a secure and protected environment. "The database will help systematize Sandwatch data collection and in time build up a significant data set covering beaches and coastal areas often not monitored by other means – thereby making a contribution to global climate change monitoring".

Dave Gray, Database Designer

In his remarks, Hans Thulstrup of UNESCO's Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building, described how UNESCO together with a wide network of partners and collaborators including the Government of Denmark, the University of Puerto Rico, and many more – most significantly hundreds of dedicated school principals, teachers and students at institutions around the world - has made Sandwatch the vibrant programme it is today. "We look forward to entering this new chapter in Sandwatch history".

Hans Thulstrup of UNESCO