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OSTP and Director John P. Holdren Celebrate Earth Day 2010

Report on Federal GLOBE Program Affirms Value of Environmental Education

OSTP Director John P. Holdren will give a free public lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, this evening as part of the White House's celebration of Earth Day 2010. Dr. Holdren's talk, "Science and Technology for Sustainable Well-Being: Priorities and Policies in the Obama Administration," will highlight Administration initiatives that are addressing the pressing economic, environmental, energy-, and climate-related challenges facing the Nation today.

Dr. Holdren will also note that today marks not only the 40th anniversary of Earth Day but also the 15th anniversary of a Federal program that embodies the central principles of Earth Day—the Global Learning & Observations to Benefit the Environment, or "GLOBE," program. OSTP today released a new report that affirms the many benefits of that environmental education program—launched on Earth Day 1995—and lays out a map for future accomplishments.

Supported primarily by NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Science Foundation, GLOBE is a worldwide primary- and secondary-school-based science and education program designed to open up the world of scientific discovery to students by getting them into the field to make actual environmental measurements, such as air temperature, waterway acidity, and sunlight intensity. Since its launch in 1995, the program has grown to connect—in an enormous data-sharing network—more than 20,000 schools in 112 countries.

Students in GLOBE schools, along with the 50,000 teachers that GLOBE has trained in those schools, have collected and uploaded more than 20 million environmental and climate measurements in the past 15 years—a data set that is openly available for collaborative scientific research by students and professional scientists alike. To facilitate this important approach to hands-on learning, GLOBE provides training for teachers and helps coordinate classroom visits by working scientists to teach students

how to use data collection tools and how best to analyze and visually display their findings.

“GLOBE is an important tool for educating the next generation of climate and environmental scientists, giving students the opportunity to share in the excitement of scientific discovery in their own backyards,” Dr. Holdren said.

The new report, produced by OSTP, reaffirms the value of GLOBE as part of the Obama Administration’s commitment to science education and environmental stewardship and lays out important goals for the years ahead. In particular it takes note of an enhanced focus on climate education through GLOBE’s new Student Climate Research Campaign, the curriculum for which focuses sequentially on global warming, the carbon and energy footprint, climate and human health, and ecosystems, agriculture, and biodiversity.

This campaign—supported in part by an additional \$3 million that Congress allocated to GLOBE this year—will involve more than 1 million students in climate research by providing them and their teachers the training and tools to make measurements of local conditions over extended periods and to compare their readings against historical records. And through the GLOBE international network of teachers and scientists, students will be able to understand not only changes in their local climate but also compare them to others around the world.

GLOBE is just one element in an array of programs and activities being supported by the Administration in the domain of environmental science and education, many of which are highlighted on a special [Earth Day website](#) launched this week by the White House.

Holdren—a world-renowned expert on energy technology and policy, environmental science, and nuclear arms control and nonproliferation—is a key figure in the Obama Administration’s quest to develop greener energy sources, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and minimize the dangers from climate change. He is also a leading advocate for increased support of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. He has long made a practice of spending time with K-12 as well as college and university students to talk about the excitement of applying science and technology to addressing the great societal challenges in economy, environment, and international security. On Earth Day 2009, Dr. Holdren spoke to students at Takoma Park Middle School, a science, math, and computer science magnet school in Montgomery County, Maryland, widely known for its excellent teachers and ambitious students.

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