

FINAL Press Release

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On World Oceans Day, Interface and ZSL announce partnership to tackle environmental problem blighting developing world shores

Innovative cross-disciplinary partnership aims to establish community-based supply chain for discarded fishing nets

Global carpet tile manufacturer Interface is partnering with conservation charity the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to tackle the growing problem of discarded fishing nets in some of the world's poorest coastal communities. The Net-Works partnership, which launches with a pilot on Danajon Bank, the Philippines, is novel in its intention to address a major environmental issue in a way that will deliver social and commercial benefits. Its aim: to establish a community based supply chain for discarded nets that will improve the livelihood of local fishers, while providing Interface with an innovative source of recycled materials for its carpet tiles.

Fishing nets made from different types of nylon - often the same nylon used to make carpet yarn - are frequently discarded due to wear and tear and then replaced. In developing countries, artisanal fishers frequently leave their nets on beaches or in the sea where they can last for centuries, continuing to catch or injure marine life and pollute beaches. In Danajon Bank the problem is particularly acute, and it is estimated that the nets discarded in a year could cover the length of the Bank 400 times over. The fishers, however, are often living in extreme hardship and locked into declining fisheries with few opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and environmental degradation.

Nigel Stansfield, Chief Innovation Officer, Interface explains, "Our Mission Zero goal is to eliminate our negative impact on the Earth by 2020, and phasing out our reliance on virgin raw materials is a big part of this. Partnering with ZSL and

other experts, our objective is to convert ‘waste’ from the environment – in this case, discarded fishing nets – into raw materials for our own manufacturing. And what’s really special is that at the same time we are aiming to create livelihood opportunities for some of the world’s poorest, coastal communities – communities that are often overlooked. This is a great example of organisations from different sectors coming together and pushing the boundaries – collaborating on a project with the potential to be good for the environment, for society and for the bottom-line.”

Following a scoping project earlier this year, Net-Works is embarking on a six-month pilot on Danajon Bank - a global centre of marine shore fish biodiversity but also one of the most degraded coral reefs in the world. The pilot will see Net-Works collaborate with local experts, fishing communities and conservation group Project Seahorse Foundation for Marine Conservation, with the aim of establishing a viable community-based supply chain for the discarded nets. Organised community groups will take on the collection, processing and transport of the nets in return for payment that will be used to fund livelihood development schemes.

Dr. Nick Hill from ZSL says, “We know that this business model will be challenging to implement but we hope to show the positive impact that can be achieved when specialists in business, conservation and development combine their skills. Our objective is to create a sustainable business model with environmental, social and commercial benefit that can be replicated in other areas of the Philippines and beyond.”

Notes for editors:

About Interface

Interface is a global leader in the design and production of carpet tiles. Its products combine beauty and innovation with functionality and environmental credentials to help customers bring their design vision to life.

Interface was one of the first companies to publicly commit to sustainability, when it made a pledge in the mid-nineties to eliminate its impact on the environment by 2020. Known as Mission Zero, it influences every aspect of the

business and inspires the company to continually push the boundaries in order to achieve its goal.

Interface is now more than half way to reaching Mission Zero and has been widely recognised for its achievements to date. Its products have also achieved several awards, specifically for design and innovation, the most recent being The Athenaeum Good Design Award for World Textiles.

About the Zoological Society of London

Founded in 1826, the ZSL is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity: the key role is the conservation of animals and their habitats. The Society runs ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, carries out scientific research in the Institute of Zoology and is actively involved in field conservation in 50 countries worldwide. For further information please visit www.zsl.org

About Danajon Bank

The Philippines is the global centre of marine shore fish biodiversity, but it faces some of the greatest levels of threat of all marine areas globally. Danajon Bank is a double barrier reef in the centre of the Philippines, and one of the most degraded coral reefs in the world. The area has high population densities as well as high levels of poverty. The island villages are highly dependent on marine resources, mainly fishing and seaweed farming.

Project Seahorse Foundation for Marine Conservation, Inc (PSFMCI)

PSFMCI is a Filipino NGO based in Cebu City. PSF's work focuses on Danajon Bank, where they are committed to the conservation of marine ecosystems through equitable and sustainable use. PSF has been working in communities on Danajon Bank since 1995, and has assisted in the establishment of 34 community-based Marine Protected Areas; one of which won a prestigious national award in 2007. They have also helped to establish a Fisher's Alliance on Danajon Bank in order to improve fisheries management.

For more information, high-resolution images or to arrange an interview with a Net-Works spokesperson, please contact:

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