

INSPIRATION

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THE GREEN REVOLUTION

From air pollution to dramatic climate changes, from fuel and forest depletion to land degradation, the list of environmental issues goes on ad nauseum. Add to them the series of sobering international events, catastrophes and wars.

Are we to blame? Is the earth suffering from the repercussions of our own thoughtless acts? Think about it: When was the last time you made an effort to save water? Did you even know that installing high efficiency showerheads can reduce water consumption by 50 per cent? Do you use environment-friendly shopping bags instead of plastic bags to cart your groceries?

We can't afford to ignore the issues at hand, and more Hollywood celebs have joined forces to champion their environmental causes. Working to protect wildlife and wild places to ensure a healthy environment for all life on earth, The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), known as America's most effective environmental action organisation, has Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert Redford as their trustees.

With its longtime commitment to creating green buildings and cities and providing safe drinking water for the 1.2 billion people who lack access to clean water, Global Green USA has garnered the support of Brad Pitt, Penelope Cruz and Pierce Brosnan.

Aware of the urgent need for research, analysis and solutions to the serious environmental, resource, population and development problems around the world, the World Resources Institute (WRI) was formed in 1982. The independent environmental think tank works with more than 400 partners, including scientists, governments, NGOs and businesses in 50 countries, to provide objective information and practical proposals for policy and institutional change that will foster environmentally sound, socially equitable development.

Less well known among the elite environmental movers and shakers is Barry Sternlicht, chief executive of the Starwood Capital Group, who announced the launch of '1' Hotel and Residences, the first luxury, eco-friendly global hotel brand in 2006. The concept combined the best of environmentally sustainable architecture and interior design with impeccable service and luxurious comfort. Properties are slated for launch in the US from 2010 and subsequently, to other parts of the world. To reinforce its green pledge, '1' will donate one per cent of revenue from each hotel to local environmental groups.

Perhaps the greatest green superstar is former vice-president, Al Gore. His blockbuster film *An Inconvenient Truth* seared the climate crisis into popular consciousness. Suddenly, the problems were obvious everywhere you looked:

Our food was chemically treated and genetically modified, our resources were running out, our wasteful habits were cramming landfills and gas prices were soaring.

It's time to take a positive step in the green direction: To conserve, to drive the development of eco-friendly consumption, to buy hybrids or use the MRT. To recycle, compost, "go organic", grow gardens and understand the connection between saving money, improving health and helping the environment.

Start small: Switch off the light every time you leave the room. Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 litres per month. Every effort counts. No one's perfect, but together we can solve the problems we face. Welcome to the new green movement.