

PRESS RELEASE

Flying balloon project to raise US\$ 1 million for UNICEF arrives in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, 1 July 2014 – An overland hot air balloon journeying through more than 100 countries is now in Cambodia, and was this morning at Wat Botum Park, lighting up the city skyline, to increase awareness of children's right to education and to raise funds for UNICEF's work around the world.

Andrew Parker, a hot air balloon pilot and a UNICEF fundraiser, arrived in Siem Reap last week and inflated his balloon to hundreds of children at Chunlong primary school on Tuesday before travelling to Phnom Penh where he displayed the balloon at Dangkor primary school on 24th June. After the final display this morning he will travel to Laos to continue his journey.

Mr Parker launched the 'Flying High for Kids World Balloon Project' with UNICEF in Auckland, New Zealand in December 2013. During the global journey, he and his two-person team hope to visit 200 schools and meet more than 80,000 school children.

Over the next four years, the balloon will be driven overland and flown in many locations, from the mountain passes of Central Asia, to the jungles of Africa and South America, finishing in Chile in 2017.

Andrew Parker said: "I had the idea of flying for a cause back in my early teens and it has stayed with me ever since. In 2010, I first approached UNICEF with my proposal and the last four years have seen my dream slowly turn into a reality".

"I've flown balloons in many countries," he continued, "but I've never had the chance to do something on this scale. Many of the kids we'll meet won't have seen a hot air balloon before. I'm also very happy to be supporting UNICEF. As a global organization helping kids to access education all over the world, it is the partner for this project."

The project aims to raise funds for UNICEF through public donations and business partnerships.

#####

For further information:

Andrew Parker
Project Director, Flying High For Kids
E-mail:
Facebook:
Website:

Bunly Meas
Communication Specialist, UNICEF Cambodia
Tel: (+855) 12 733 909 and E-mail:

Rowena Campbell

Communication Consultant, UNICEF Cambodia

Tel: (+855) 78 903 447 and E-mail: rcampbell@unicef.org

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work in Cambodia visit: [.kh](#)

About Andrew Parker and the Flying High for Kids Project:

New Zealand commercial hot air balloon pilot and entrepreneur Andrew Parker is the Project Director and visionary behind the Flying High For Kids Project.

Born and bred in Hamilton, New Zealand, Andrew has been fascinated by hot air balloons since the age of six. He joined the Waikato Hot Air Balloon Club at 13 and started flying at 16, crewing for other balloonists to gain knowledge and experience. After leaving school, he went on to become New Zealand's youngest commercial hot air balloon pilot, passing his pilot's licence at the age of 19 while flying balloons in Alice Springs, Australia.

Keen to spread his wings, he gained more international flying experience in Europe and also learned about the business side of operations. Just after his 20th birthday, he was offered the chance to buy his mentor's business, Kiwi Balloon Company, in Hamilton, New Zealand. With strong family support he took on the challenge and over the next six years became a highly successful tourism operator.

Andrew continued to split his time between New Zealand and Europe until he sold his business in 2009 to pursue bigger challenges. For the past four years he has lived and travelled extensively through five continents, piloting balloons in 17 countries.