

PRESS RELEASE

**Arbor Day Foundation and FAO launch the
*Mantova Challenge***

From the World Forum on Urban Forests a challenge to all cities around the globe

The last day of the **1st World Forum on Urban Forests** (1 December 2018) will see the launch of the *Mantova Challenge*, which will challenge cities from all over the world to adhere to the *Tree Cities of the World* programme developed in collaboration by Arbor Day Foundation and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

This international scheme is aimed at acknowledging the efforts made by cities in implementing concrete actions to enable the environment for urban forests and green spaces to be efficiently managed, in line with the *Call for Action* launched in the framework of the Forum and calling for more sustainable, green, healthy and happy cities for all.

The ***Mantova Challenge/Tree Cities of the World*** programme is the international translation of the *Tree City USA*, the successful project implemented by Arbor Day Foundation in the United States and which has already awarded 3400 urban communities. In addition to promote an efficient management of urban tree resources, the Mantova Challenge also aims to create an international network of cities facilitating the sharing of knowledge and good practices between cities towards a more sustainable management of world urban forest and green spaces.

“Now more than ever, trees and forests can play a crucial role in making our cities healthier, safer and more sustainable” states Dan Lambe, President of the Arbor Day Foundation, the largest NGO implementing reforestation programme in the US and counting on more than one million members and supporters “This is the reason why we have started our collaboration with FAO, aimed to award cities committing to ensure that their trees and forests are properly managed”.

“We strongly believe - states Simone Borelli Forestry Officer at FAO - that the Mantova Challenge could stimulate local administrations to improve the design, planning and management of their urban trees and forests, and turn cities in greener, healthier, happier and more inclusive places”.

The programme is based on five key standards that a city must meet to be awarded *Tree Cities of the World*. Establishing a Tree Board responsible for managing the urban forest of the city, and led by either the municipality or a group of entitled citizens, is the first standard to be met. The Board will be responsible for defining the set of rules to be implemented by the local community in the management of the urban forest as well as the penalties to be applied if those rules will not be respected.

Implementing an assessment of the local tree heritage of the city, on which to develop a long term plan for its efficient management, is the next criteria to be met. The Board is also expected to be allocated a sufficient budget for the implementation of the activities related to the management of the urban forest of the city.

Officially dedicating a day to celebrate the tree heritage of the city is the last criteria to be met. This is aimed to involve the local community in the programme and raise local awareness on the importance of preserving such a key resource.

Promosso da FAO



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There could probably not be a better place than the city of Mantova - awarded for the second consecutive year as the greener Italian city (Ecosistema Urbano 2018 by Legambiente e Ambiente Italia) - to launch such an ambitious programme.

“Small and enchanting, the city of Mantova is once again playing a role in supporting efforts towards the achievement of global issues - says its mayor Mattia Palazzi -. Now more than ever, it is up to cities to take up the challenge of global sustainability. Trees and green can make cities more beautiful and safe, while also increasing social equity. Building upon this assumption, we have decided to seriously invest in urban greening”.

For more information on the **Mantova Challenge** and on the **Call for Action**:
<https://www.wfuf2018.com/en-ww/call-for-action.aspx>

The World Forum on Urban Forests is promoted by FAO and organized by the Municipality of Mantova, the Politecnico of Milan, SISEF con il patrocinio di Ministero dell’Ambiente, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole alimentari e forestali, Ente Regionale per i Servizi all’Agricoltura e alle Foreste.
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About the Arbor Day Foundation

Founded in 1972, the Arbor Day Foundation has grown to become the largest nonprofit membership organization dedicated to planting trees, with more than one million members, supporters and valued partners. Since 1972, more than 300 million Arbor Day Foundation trees have been planted in neighborhoods, communities, cities and forests throughout the world. Our vision is to help others understand and use trees as a solution to many of the global issues we face today, including air quality, water quality, climate change, deforestation, poverty and hunger. As one of the world's largest operating conservation foundations, the Arbor Day Foundation, through its members, partners and programs, educates and engages stakeholders and communities across the globe to involve themselves in its mission of planting, nurturing and celebrating trees. More information is available at: www.arborday.org

About FAO

Established in 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is a Specialized Agency of the United Nations system that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The Organization is comprised of 194 Member States, 2 associate members and 1 member organization – The European Union. Its aim is to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living for all people in FAO member countries, to secure improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of food and agricultural products, to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and to contribute towards expanding the world economy and ensure humanity’s freedom from hunger. FAO is currently present in over 130 countries. More information is available at www.fao.org

Press office: Delos 02.8052151 – delos@delosrp.it

