

1.9 million new trees for the Andes: TUI Care Foundation empowers indigenous communities and plants trees with the new TUI Forest Peru

- ***Celebrating International Day of Forests on March 21st, TUI Forest Peru is pledging to plant a total of 1.9 million trees in the famous Vilcanota mountain range***
- ***Increased attractiveness of the area through improvement and maintenance of 40 km of nature trails on the popular Vilcanota Trek and local environmental training***
- ***20 tree nurseries will be created and managed by the indigenous communities of the high Andes to increase local participation in reforestation efforts***

TUI Care Foundation
Pariser Platz 6a
10117 Berlin

www.tuicarefoundation.com

Berlin, 20 March 2024. *Over 40% of Peru's territory is covered by forest. But deforestation is progressively threatening this important natural habitat and, in particular, is negatively impacting the livelihoods of indigenous communities. TUI Forest Peru aims to restore and protect native forests in the High Andes by growing and planting native trees, addressing deforestation, supporting local livelihoods and building local leadership capacity. The initiative empowers local communities to plant new native trees in the Vilcanota mountain range close to Cusco.*

The TUI Care Foundation has committed to support the planting of a total of 1.9 million native trees, in partnership with the international NGO Global Forest Generation and the local organisation Asociación Ecosistemas Andinas. The focus of the reforestation efforts will be on Polylepis trees, that naturally adapt to growing in extreme Andean heights of 4,000 meters and above. Polylepis forests play an essential role in protecting the water security of millions of people, not just in the Andean mountains, but also in lowland towns and villages where glacial meltwater is a key source of water. They are also home to an abundance of wildlife, including Andean Condors, Spectacled Bears and Pumas, so they are also an important natural habitat.

To achieve the ambitious outcomes of the initiative, at least 20 community-run nurseries will be built and maintained, and nursery technicians will be trained, leading to the restoration of approximately 800 hectares. The nurseries have one full-time nursery technician each, but they are communally managed in line with the social organisation of high Andean communities, where many people take turns taking care of the growing saplings.

TUI Forest Peru will also improve and maintain 40 km of nature trails with informative signage and building infrastructure on the popular Vilcanota Trek. Visited by a growing number of tourists each year, the Vilcanota Trek is the main tourist trek through the Sacred Valley of the Incas, after the Inca Trail leading to Machu Picchu. The ecotourism experience covers nine government-recognised conservation areas managed by 14 communities, as well as ongoing standing forest protection sites and reforestation activities. The infrastructural investment will positively impact the attractiveness of the

trail for visitors and support over 10,000 local community members who use the trails themselves to travel and earn from the income from camping sites and other tourism activities. Communities will also be supported with training on how to manage the Vilcanota Trek and protected areas in general, the provision of locally produced clean cookstoves, and environmental education workshops.

TUI Forest Peru is part of the TUI Care Foundation's global Forests programme, which plants trees and takes forest-based experiences to the heart of tourism communities in countries including Spain, the Dominican Republic, Kenya and Zanzibar.

Pictures can be found on www.tuigroup.com

About the TUI Care Foundation

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Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

www.tuicarefoundation.com

About the Global Forest Generation

Global Forest Generation's mission is to restore forest ecosystems – at the scale needed to reverse the climate and biodiversity crisis. It does so by developing large-scale, multi-country restoration initiatives across critical ecosystems and catalyse the tools, resources, partnerships and capacities needed for local leaders to succeed in the long term.

www.globalforestgeneration.org

About Asociación Ecosistemas Andinas

Asociación Ecosistemas Andinas (ECOAN) is a non-governmental non-profit organisation dedicated to the preservation of endangered species of forests of Queuña in the mountains of Cusco, working hand in hand with the local communities. For over twenty years, ECOAN has been partnering with indigenous communities to provide long-term restoration and protection of native Polylepis forests in the high Andes of Peru. Harnessing local and indigenous principles of "Ayni and Minka", which in high Andean cultures comes close to the meaning of "reciprocity and shared communal work" to

collaboratively create a forest conservation model driven by and for local and indigenous communities is ECOAN's unique innovation. It results in forging trusting, enduring relationships with the people planting and protecting the forests as a communal service where every villager participates, and a particularly cost-effective, as well as a profoundly culturally-respectful approach to restoration.

www.ecoanperu.org

Contact:

TUI Care Foundation
Anna-Lena Strehl
Head of External Affairs
+49 151 22952553
anna.lena.strehl@tui.com

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Pariser Platz 6a
10117 Berlin

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