

MEDIA RELEASE - 24 May 2002

Kids for Tigers International Tiger Ambassadors

'Tiger Express': Visit to South Africa, May 29-June 4, 2002

In a pioneering initiative to share conservation strategies across continents, a four-person delegation of Young International Tiger Ambassadors is headed from India for South Africa. This is a unique idea where four children and their guardians, along with Bittu Sahgal, Editor, *Sanctuary* and member of the Indian Board for Wildlife, will carry India's tiger conservation message to South Africa. South African National Parks will host these four young 'International Tiger Ambassadors' in the Kruger National Park. This will be the first visit of this kind by a delegation of young wildlife defenders. It seeks to bridge the oceans between India and South Africa and to protect the natural heritage of our great nations.

The initiative is part of the **Sanctuary-Britannia 'Kids for Tigers' Programme** and is expected to trigger many unique and mutually empowering exchanges between two of the richest wildlife nations of the world.

In South Africa, India's Tiger Ambassadors will be interacting with a group of kids from Soweto and Ga-Rankuwa as part of the SANParks **Imbewu Programme**. This will be a great learning experience for the children with regards to conservation and wildlife management, as well as a wonderful opportunity to engage in a cultural exchange. Mr. Murphy Morobe, Board Chairperson of South African National Parks will personally meet the children in the Kruger National Park.

A reciprocal visit will be undertaken by a group of kids from SANParks' programmes on February 2003. They will participate in the annual Kids for Tigers Camp Ranthambhore in Rajasthan. Kids for Tigers is, of course, fully supported by India's Project Tiger and in a message to the children on the eve of their departure for South Africa Rajesh Gopal, Director, Project Tiger said: "When Project Tiger was launched almost three decades ago, it was the voice of one million children that drew focus on the plight of the striped predator. All of us at Project Tiger today not only support you and the Kids for Tigers initiative, but feel strengthened by your resolve and sheer enthusiasm."

We are confident that with children as the cement this Indo-South African initiative will create a new understanding between two continents and will further the objective of securing the future of the world's wildlife.

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