

Headline: Astronaut to watch Earth Hour from space station—WWF

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MANILA, Philippines—This year's observance of Earth Hour is no longer just for people on terra firma.

While participants in switch-off sites, which for the Philippines would be in Makati, Cebu and Davao, revel in the dark, Earth Hour Astronaut-Ambassador Andre Kuipers would be at the International Space Station standing vigil over the worldwide celebration on March 31, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Kuipers would be sharing photos and live commentary, WWF said in a statement Thursday.

The group said Earth Hour founder and Executive Director Andy Ridley is expected to celebrate Earth Hour 2012 in the Philippines. The country has been declared a Hero Country for topping Earth Hour's global town and city participation levels for three straight years.

This year's earth hour would be observed on March 31, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

But aside from being a universal event, the WWF also seeks to make Earth Hour an interpersonal thing with its "I Will If You Will" campaign.

It seeks to engage people to do their bit to save the planet by getting two parties to enter into a social contract where one would promise to do something if the other would take on a challenge.

WWF said its Philippine National Ambassador Marc Nelson has pledged to swim with sharks while in a panda costume, and to plant trees underwater while eating a carrot, if 5,000 of his Twitter followers would pledge to reuse shopping bags and avoid plastic.

Another national ambassador, Rovilson Fernandez, has pledged to run races clad a Panda costume if WWF-Philippines' 23,000 fans choose to take the stairs over the elevator for one whole month.

WWF also said Cynthia Dayco, a mother and WWF-Philippines Facebook fan, promised to let her son play a computer Minecraft an hour longer over the summer if he would turn off the lights and fan every time he leaves his room.

Earth Hour is a global movement wherein people switch off their lights for 60 minutes to save power.

The event is intended to raise awareness of global warming and generate support for energy saving measures that would help conserve the earth's dwindling natural resources.

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