

Good evening, on behalf of GFDD and its Executive Director, Natasha Despotovic, we thank you for joining us to celebrate this 44th edition of Earth Day with the NY Premiere of *On the Edge, Antarctica*.

My name is Emy Rodriguez, I am the Manager of Environmental Programs for GFDD, a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of global collaboration and exchange. With offices in NY, Washington DC and Santo Domingo, the Foundation conducts research, enhances public understanding, and offers capacity building in areas crucial to the social, economic, and sustainable development of the Dominican Republic and the region.

GFDD creates, facilitates, and implements international human development projects, building on its own experience, expertise and strong national and international networks.

In this regard we are grateful and give thanks to our long standing partners, such as the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, for making this event possible as well as the support from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Committee on NGO's (CoNGO), and the Earth Day Network.

We are very honored to be able to have with us here today noted oceans expert, award-winning journalist, author, filmmaker, adventurer and six-time grantee of the National Geographic Expeditions Council, Mr. Jon Bowermaster. Jon has dedicated his life to traveling and documenting rarely seen corners of the world, in doing so he challenges our perception that vast remote places, are immune to our actions. His films reveal that places like Antarctica, are in fact fragile ecosystems, threatened by regional warming and loss of sea ice, all linked to rising global levels of carbon dioxide.

On this Earth day GFDD recognizes the power the medium of film holds, providing an effective platform for civil society to engage, and raise awareness on key environmental issues.

With this in mind, before I leave you with Jon Bowermaster to introduce his film, I therefore invite you to stay after the screening for a panel discussion on climate change and sea level rise, with His Excellency Ambassador Ahmed Sareer of the Permanent Mission of Maldives to the UN, and Jamil Ahmad, Deputy Director of UNEP New York.

Please welcome JB.