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United Nations Association of Greater Boston celebrates United Nations-World Environment Day's 40th anniversary

July 26, 2012 - Green Buildings

The United Nations Association of Greater Boston (UNA-GB) marked the 40th anniversary of the United Nations' World Environment Day (WED) locally, celebrating its global theme, "Green Economy: Does it include you?" The event was aimed at highlighting local efforts in Massachusetts, the Boston community, and specifically recognizing the environmental leadership of one Boston-based corporation, John Hancock Financial. Recently John Hancock Financial's headquarter offices at 601 Congress St. became the first existing building in New England to become LEED certified at the platinum level by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

The annual World Environment Day was created by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1972 as a way to raise awareness about environmental issues. More than 8,000 WED activities, including today's program at John Hancock, have been registered at UNEP's global 2012 WED website.

Jennifer Taranto, board member and former chairperson of the Mass. chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, presented John Hancock with platinum certification for 601 Congress St. and three gold certifications for its buildings at 200 Berkeley St. built in the 1940s, 380 Stuart St., built in the 1930s and 197 Clarendon St. built in the 1920s.

"The U.S. Green Building Council applauds Boston for its ongoing commitment to green building practices," said Roger Platt, senior vice president of global policy and law at the U.S. Green Building Council. "We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Association of Greater Boston to raise awareness about environmental stewardship and commend companies such as John Hancock for striving for the best in sustainability."

In accepting the LEED certifications, Jim Boyle, president of John Hancock, said, "Our top rankings reflect a strong dedication to support the environment shared by John Hancock and our parent Manulife Financial Corporation, as well as significant effort on the part of John Hancock's property management group."

Boyle said "While LEED certification has been a major objective, it is just one of the many examples of our company's longstanding commitment to conducting our global businesses in a manner that reflects the highest standards of environmental responsibility."

In conjunction with its celebration of World Environment Day, the United Nations Association of Greater Boston and John Hancock were together holding an employee volunteer project for the Boston Harbor Association. In addition, John Hancock's Green Committee also organized an employee expo of environmentally friendly vendors offering tools and tips for going green including: Cintas (shredding, document destruction and recycling), Save that Stuff (recycling for work and home), The Green Restaurant Group, Aramark (John Hancock's on-site caterer which uses local

vendors for produce, etc.), Green Living (Earth-friendly goods for the home), Mass Save (ways to save on energy), Lexmark, and Office Max.

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