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A United Fight against COVID-19

On **19 - 25 October 2021**, renowned mountain athletes, representatives from the private and public sectors, and youth will climb Mt Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa (5895m), to highlight the need for a united fight against COVID-19. The Big Climb is about **hope and collective action**. The Big Climb will raise funds to better track and understand the virus, equip health care workers with protective equipment, and to purchase vaccines for equitable distribution.

Why the climb is important? As described by the World Health Organization (WHO), 'With a fast-moving pandemic, no one is safe, unless everyone is safe' with WHO warning that the world faced "catastrophic moral failure" because of unequal COVID-19 policies. Climbers will reach the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro on 24 October, **United Nations Day 2021**, a symbolic timing to call on global togetherness in the face of common adversity.

Why Mt Kilimanjaro? The climb will bring together 40 climbers, from diverse backgrounds. The mountain remains accessible to all. Those with climbing experience will be able to assist fellow climbers – climbing as one and demonstrating solidarity.

The Big Climb impact?

- The climb will raise awareness and funds, at a global level, for a united fight against COVID-19. Climbers and supporters will highlight 'The Big Climb' through social media. Media will be invited to showcase the climb.
- The climb will call on all members of the public to contribute to 'The Big Climb', from 19 to 25 October. Individuals and organizations will be invited to organize their own climbs, either: climbing hills or mountains; climbing stairs; or walking self-determined distances, in support of a united fight against COVID-19. Hence the name 'The Big Climb' – it isn't just the Mt Kilimanjaro climb, it regroups all activities under the same name. A website will be created for the climb, recording all 'The Big Climb' contributions and activities.
- 'The Big Climb' will fundraise for COVID-19 Solidarity Response Funds.
- 'The Big Climb' will work with Tanzanian authorities to put COVID-19 protective measures in place in the Kilimanjaro region, and beyond.
- The climb organizers will ensure all guides, cooks and porters participating in the climb either quarantine, or/and receive a COVID-19 vaccine ahead of the climb.

10 Kenyan and Tanzanian youth selected to do the climb will also take part in a six-month mentorship program, designed and funded by PDAID Foundation. The program will assist the young women and men to further develop their leadership skills, help identify key education and employment opportunities, and build a roadmap to success.



Who will organize the climb?

The climb is supported and coordinated by several partners. To date, these include Kilimanjaro Initiative (KI), PDAID Foundation, and Sport and Sustainability International (SandSi).

The coordination of the event is being led by:

- Simon Mtuy, Founder of Summit Expeditions & Nomadic Experiences. As a way to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS in the Kilimanjaro region, Simon set the world record for the fastest unsupported ascent and descent of Kilimanjaro (9 hours 21 minutes 47 seconds round-trip)
- Tim Challen, Founder of KI. Shot and injured during an armed robbery in Nairobi in 2003, Tim has since led more than 600 climbers to the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro. The annual climbs, in partnership with UN agencies, public and private sectors, raise awareness on critical social issues.
- Ingrid Beutler, after working for the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace and the International Olympic Committee, now advises sports federations, governments and UN entities on the ethical imperatives of sport.

Potential Supporters and Partners? Africa Union, WHO, World Federation of Public Health Associations, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies, foundations and trusts, mountain gear brands, private companies and individual donors.



Climb dates: 19 to 25 October 2021

Climb route: Rongai route *(tented camps)*

Number of climbers:

40

10 renowned mountain athletes from different continents. They will be leading calls for solidarity in face of the pandemic and for greater action to protect the fragile mountain environment, the most sensitive environment to climate change.

10 young persons from the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro in Kenya and Tanzania. They will take part in a 10-day training camp at the foot of the mountain, prior to the climb.

10 representatives from the public sector. These may include public health workers, UN Goodwill Ambassadors and staff, and government representatives.

10 representatives/sponsors from the private sector.

+Support Team 3 documentary/filming crew.

10 7 support climbers, including doctors and climb organizers.

In addition, the climbers will be supported by 100 guides, cooks and porters.

Budget: \$100,000

Sponsors: UN entities, government agencies, pharmaceutical companies, mountain gear brands, private companies and individual donors.



Flagging-off event: The event will take place at the Marangu Hotel on 19 October 2021. It will include high-level dignitaries from the UN and governments.

Opportunities: The climb provides strong visual examples of how multilateral partnerships are needed to equitably manage the pandemic. Filming the youth at the training camp and when they climb begins with renowned mountain athletes, and representatives from the private and public sectors, will provide inspiring media coverage. It can showcase to millions of viewers how people from different backgrounds can unite in the face of common adversity.

Sustainability: The climb will implement a full sustainability strategy to ensure the sensitive mountain environment within which the climb is conducted is protected and that the local communities who depend on the mountain are supported.

- **Carbon-neutral and restoring biodiversity:** The climb's carbon footprint will be scientifically assessed with the aim of being fully carbon-neutral. Carbon offsetting will be made by planting trees at the foot of the mountain prior to the climb, to offset the Greenhouse Gas emissions particularly related to the travel of the international climbers.
- **Social impact:** Only local mountain climb operators, guides and porters will be hired, and local food used.