

## Press Release

17 September 2014

# THE INBEV-BAILLET LATOUR ANTARCTICA FELLOWSHIP AWARD GRANTED TO RESEARCHER JAN LENAERTS

Brussels, Belgium, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – A young Belgian researcher, Jan Lenaerts was this afternoon presented with the prestigious €150,000 InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Fellowship, by Jean-Jacques Derwael, a renowned geodetic surveyor, for his proposal to investigate how much snow melts currently on the ice shelves in East Antarctica, by how much that melt will increase in the future, and how that will impact ice shelf stability and a resulting rise in global sea levels.

The presentation took place in Brussels in the afternoon of September 17<sup>th</sup>, during the “Antarctica – The Next Generation” Conference and Award Ceremony for the InBev-Baillet Latour Fellowship at the Palais des Académies / Paleis der Academiën, Brussels, Belgium.

Jan Lenaerts, based at the Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research at the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands) was recognized by the InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Fellowship Committee for his submission “BENEMELT” which aims to improve understanding of melting ice shelves, the floating and stabilizing extensions of the ice sheet and will study how much snow melts currently on these ice shelves, by how much that melt will increase in the future, and how that will impact ice shelf stability.

His project is expected to provide important insights into how surface melt affects ice shelves, and provide data for improving climate models in order to provide an estimate of present-day and future surface melt on the East Antarctic ice shelves.

*“East Antarctica is the earth’s largest ice body. If the planet warms, the ice shelves holding all this ice in place could break off, leading to massive discharge of ice in the ocean and potential sea level rise of tens of meters”, said Lenaerts. “My fieldwork with the support of the InBev-Baillet Latour Fellowship will shed light on which processes are responsible for this ice shelf breakup, thereby improving the estimates how, when and where East Antarctica is most vulnerable to global warming.”*

To begin fieldwork on the **BENEMELT** project, Jan Lenaerts will travel to the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica polar research station in November 2014. He will spend three weeks working on the Roi Baudouin ice shelf. More information on the BENEMELT project will be available in the coming months on the website dedicated to the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica research station.

### **InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Fellowship**

A joint initiative between the International Polar Foundation and the InBev-Baillet Latour Fund, the InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Fellowship Award promotes science and scientific excellence in Antarctica by young scientists. The fellowship, worth € 150,000, recognizes the importance of science carried out in Antarctica for improving the understanding of the Earth system, and encourages scientific research at, or close to Princess Elisabeth Antarctica polar research station.

*"Members of the Fellowship Committee were unanimous in selecting Jan Lenaerts and the BENEMELT project for the Fellowship Award as this exciting project will bring new elements to the study of climate-ice shelf interaction", said president of the Fellowship Scientific Jury Prof. Jörn Thiede. "It will add to what is already being done by other scientists on the Roi Baudouin Ice Shelf, will bring a new data set for models and will make a significant additional contribution to research activities at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica Station".*

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## Press kit

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## Press information:

International Polar Foundation  
Elizabeth Van Den Bergh, Media Officer  
GSM: 0485 853 823  
E-mail: [press@polarfoundation.org](mailto:press@polarfoundation.org)  
Twitter: #iblaf2014 and @PolarFoundation

InBev-Baillet Latour Fund  
Alain De Waele, General Secretary  
Tel.: 016 27 61 59 - GSM: 0473 80 84 73  
E-mail: [alain.dewaele@iblf.be](mailto:alain.dewaele@iblf.be)

## Bio Jan Lenaerts

Jan Lenaerts was born in Sint-Niklaas, Belgium on the 13th of May 1985. From young age onwards, he has been fascinated by weather in general, and more specifically by winter, snow, ice and related phenomena. Driven by this fascination, he decided to leave Belgium, where no specific meteorology study exists, and start the Bachelor Study of Soil, Water and (of course) Atmosphere in Wageningen. After three years of hard work, he received a Bachelor (2006), and he prolonged his stay in Wageningen to get his Master degree as well (2008). During these years, he took the opportunity to follow additional Atmospheric courses at Reading University (UK) and performed his first long research at CNRM (Toulouse, FR). When he read on a PhD vacancy on Antarctic climate, he applied and he was hired to pursue his PhD research in September 2008.

During his PhD studies he focused on regional climate modeling of ice sheet climate. In particular, he has been working on the better understanding of drifting snow processes. His results clearly indicate that mainly on Antarctica, where wind speeds are the highest on Earth, drifting snow processes are important. They effectively remove mass from the ice sheet surface by sublimation and redistribute snow on a regional scale. In February 2013 he successfully defended his PhD thesis. After his PhD, Jan decided to return to his home country Belgium, but remained professionally active in Utrecht as a postdoctoral researcher. During the years to come, his interests remain focused on ice sheet climates and the interactions with the remainder of the global climate system, using fully coupled climate models. The data that we will retrieve in Antarctica will aid to evaluate and improve these climate models.

## International Polar Foundation

The International Polar Foundation supports polar scientific research for the advancement of knowledge, the promotion of informed action on climate change, and the development of a sustainable society.

### **InBev-Baillet Latour Fund**

The InBev-Baillet Latour Fund was founded in 1974 by Count Alfred de Baillet Latour, Member of the Board of Directors of Brasseries Artois from 1947 to 1980. Its objective is to encourage work of great value to humanity, of a mainly scientific, educational or artistic nature, and to reward such work by means of prizes or study grants, excluding any profit motive and regardless of political, trade union, philosophical or religious convictions. The InBev-Baillet Latour Fund is active in the following main areas: medical research, Belgian heritage, university education and the Olympic movement.

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