



United Nations Development Programme

Communications Office

PRESS RELEASE

UNDP CALLS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR EQUATOR PRIZE 2004

Germany joins Equator Initiative as it Announces Call for Nominations for Prestigious \$30,000 Equator Prize 2004 on World Environment Day

Berlin, Germany, 5 June 2003—The official Call for Nominations for the prestigious Equator Prize 2004 begins today at the *Biodiversity and Poverty Reduction* meeting in Berlin.

The Equator Prize 2004 will honour the achievements of grassroots initiatives from the tropics that creatively reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Each of the six winners will receive a US\$30,000 cash award to enhance the effectiveness of their efforts to achieve local sustainable development. The winners, along with every one of the 25 finalists, will also be given an opportunity to share the lessons of their experience—with each other, with other communities around the globe, and with key decision makers.

“Local communities throughout the tropical developing world are charting a path towards true sustainable development,” says Alvaro Umaña, leader of UNDP’s Environmentally Sustainable Development Group. “Their work is proof that biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction are mutually inclusive aims, and the Equator Prize is designed in part to focus global attention on these local success stories.”

Today’s meeting in Berlin—a key component of this year’s World Environment Day celebrations—marks the launch of the Equator Prize 2004 and the German Government’s decision to join forces with other international partners in the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Equator Initiative.

Germany has taken notice of these success stories. The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has chosen today’s event to join the existing partners of the Equator Initiative. The partnership includes BrasilConnects, the Government of Canada, the International Development Research Centre, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment and the United Nations Foundation.

The biennial Equator Prize was first awarded at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The winners, selected from some 420 nominees from 77 countries, reflected the overall diversity of the competition and ranged from a community-owned ‘eco-safari’ lodge in Kenya to a Brazilian group specializing in the sustainable use of forest products in the manufacture of natural cosmetics.

The Equator Prize 2004 ceremony will take place at the Seventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Malaysia in early 2004. UNDP and the entire Equator Initiative partnership call on all interested parties to help ensure that not a single exemplary community initiative escapes the attention of the Equator Prize jury.

For further information, please contact: Sean Southey, Equator Initiative Manager, or visit the project’s website at www.undp.org/equatorinitiative.

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