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The Equator Initiative launches the internationally renowned Equator Prize 2006 to honor initiatives for their achievement in reducing poverty through biodiversity conservation.

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The Community Taba brought together communities and stakeholders from around the world to generate new ideas for the realization of the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

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18-31 March, 2006 • COP 8 • Curitiba, Brazil

#### A Voice from the Community Taba

Livingstone Maluleke from South Africa reports on the outcomes of the Equator Initiative's tenth dialogue space.

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The Equator Initiative officially welcomes Rare as its newest partner.

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Equator Prize 2006. For the third time we will honor new and innovative local best practice initiatives in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. The 2006 Prize will award three regional prizes (one in each region: Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa), in addition to one prize to a community programme associated with a UNESCO World Heritage site, and one prize to a biodiversity-based business.

Our last Newsletter reached you during the Equator Initiative's busy and exciting time at the Community Taba in Brazil. Since our return we have received encouraging letters from community members that remind us once again of the importance of advancing the involvement of local voices in biodiversity conservation and policy articulation. The Equator Initiative team would like to take the opportunity to thank the participating communities and volunteers for their engagement and support that made the Community Taba a memorable success.

Please pass this issue around so that we can call upon a wide audience for new and exciting Equator Prize nominations.

Sincerely,

The Equator Initiative Team

Photo: Indigenous Hut at the Community Taba in Curitiba, Brazil.

## ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF THE EQUATOR PRIZE 2006

### Equator Prize 2006 Nominate Now! Click Here!

A core component of the Equator Initiative partnership, the biennial Equator Prize recognizes local communities throughout the equatorial belt that successfully combine biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.

Prize winners receive international recognition for their work and an opportunity to help shape international policy and practice in the field, as well as a monetary award of US\$30,000 each. Adding to the excitement of the Equator Prize 2006, one finalist will be selected as recipient of a Pride campaign, supplied by international conservation nonprofit and new Equator Initiative partner *Rare*.

Since its inception in 2002, the Equator Prize has highlighted the accomplishments of over 850 grassroots community project nominees, recognized 53 finalists and awarded 14 winners. Equator Prize finalists and winners have spanned the globe from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific. Finalists are selected on the principal criteria of impact, partnerships, sustainability, innovation and transferability, leadership and empowerment, and equality and inclusion.

Past recipients of the award range from sustainable forestry eco-enterprises in indigenous communities in Mexico and Colombia to a women-run indigenous seed conservation project in India, from sustainable fishing initiatives in Tanzania and Fiji to eco-tourism ventures throughout the tropics. Equator Prize finalists share the common feature of reconciling viable livelihoods with the maintenance of biological diversity and ecological balance.

For detailed information about previous Equator Prize Finalists and Winners, please click [here](#).



*In 2004, seven communities received the Equator Prize for outstanding commitment to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.*



#### HOW TO NOMINATE FOR THE EQUATOR PRIZE 2006

- To nominate yourself or other local initiatives for the Equator Prize please visit our Website [www.equatorinitiative.org](http://www.equatorinitiative.org)
- You can complete the Equator Prize nomination form online or return it via fax, email, or mail
- Nominations are due by 31 October 2006
- For more information please contact the Equator Initiative at [equatorinitiative@undp.org](mailto:equatorinitiative@undp.org)

The Equator Prize 2006 aims to draw an unprecedented number of nominations. With the energy, enthusiasm, and networking capabilities of development and conservation community members like yourself, we believe this to be a realistic goal. We hope you will assist us by nominating (and encouraging self-nominations of) qualified grassroots community initiatives that match our criteria. All information and forms are available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese on our website and in hard copy by request. All nominations must be submitted by **31 October 2006**.

From the pool of nominees, a technical advisory committee (TAC) consisting of community development and conservation experts will select the finalists that represent the most innovative, inclusive, and effective community projects. The Equator Prize 2006 will culminate in the selection of five winners - one in each region of eligibility (Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific), one community-based project linked to a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one project that best exemplifies a sustainable biodiversity-based enterprise.

Through the Equator Prize 2006, we can continue to forge a global movement for poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation that demonstrates the very real successes being achieved by grassroots and community organizations around the world.

## Community Taba: Local Voices for a Global Vision at the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

From March 18th - 31st, a critical mass of local and international stakeholders convened in Curitiba, Brazil to generate ideas, coordinate their voices, garner support, and inform policy for biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement efforts at the Equator Initiative's 10th global dialogue space, the Community Taba, held at the Convention for Biological Diversity's (CBD) 8th Conference of the Parties (COP 8).

As government ministers and leaders of international organizations convened in the COP 8 plenary to discuss strategies for achieving biodiversity conservation goals such as access and benefit sharing, protecting traditional knowledge and knowledge-holders, and reaching the 2010 Biodiversity Target, over 80 community leaders from around the world gathered in a nearby traditional meeting space to compare local, on-the-ground successes and challenges, and to chart a way forward for the sharing of community knowledge, solidarity, partnership, and multi-level policy influence. Participants gathered to share experiences and gain insights regarding the myriad technical, financial, social, educational, and political issues associated with creating and operating successful and sustainable local projects joining biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.

The Community Taba was made possible by the UNDP Equator Initiative and 28 partner organizations, including SwedBio, Wallace Global Fund, GTZ, IUCN-EARO, and Conservation International. The dialogue space was facilitated by grassroots community and conservation leaders and gave all participants a forum for presenting, debating, and drafting ideas to advance their development and conservation agendas at the local and institutional levels, and at COP 8 itself. Official Taba side events included in-depth presentations and Q&A sessions with community project leaders, interactive sessions with government and organization officials attending COP 8, synergistic brainstorming sessions with fellow participants, the crafting of a Community Taba Declaration, a site visit to an Equator Prize winning project, and daily festivities that honored the rich cultural heritage of Taba participants and celebrated the hard work of the group.

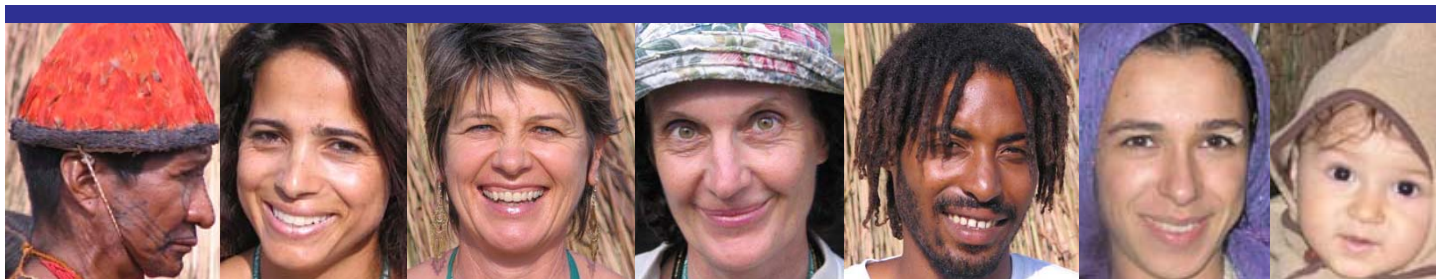


*The Community Dialogues were held in an indigenous village setting of huts constructed by the InterTribal Committee of Brazil, next to the main hall of COP 8.*

On an informal level, the open and inclusive Taba environment fostered relationship-building, network strengthening and friendships that generate positive results for community project outcomes and the growing grassroots conservation and development movement.

A typical day at the Taba began with community representatives delivering thematic presentations on topics as diverse as island and agricultural biodiversity, preserving and leveraging indigenous knowledge, biodiversity-based enterprises, and incorporating MDGs into project strategy and implementation. Organic vegetarian lunch breaks moved into small-group discussions in the afternoon, with Taba members outlining challenges and envisioning ways forward in the issue areas addressed that day, and then reassembling to share the ideas generated by the break-out groups.

After ten rigorous days of hard work and hearty celebration, there was no doubt that Taba members had forged a vibrant new community, united by their many achievements which included: conducting critical exchange among grassroots community leaders, identifying tangible strategies and methodologies for actualizing conservation projects, and solidifying relationships with international policymakers and funders.



Faces of the Community Taba:

Nearly 80 community representatives from across Latin America and around the globe gathered in Curitiba, Brazil.

## A Voice from the Taba: Livingstone Maluleke's Experience

Upon arriving in Curitiba, my first impression was that the Government of Brazil had made outstanding organizational arrangements, with ample facilities placed at our disposal and generous hospitality offered to the participants. Information and assistance were made available by the people of Curitiba and the State of Paraná - in particular, the thousands of green-shirted volunteer "angels" who provided the human face of Brazilian hospitality. Alongside the official proceedings of the COP, the Community Taba was a purely traditional place, established as a temporary representation and depiction of community life in different countries. It was here that the global rural community leaders met to talk to each other, share common experiences, and forge a relationship upon which to discuss, among other things, the wise use of biodiversity.



Very important topics were facilitated and discussed at the Taba by representatives from all corners of the world. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) emphasizes that active participation of communities in policy formulation is an effective way to ensure that communities are true partners in attaining the MDGs; as such, we the participants formulated a Community Taba Declaration.

### COMMUNITY TABA DECLARATION

Taba participants focused on refining key messages into a concise statement to global leaders in conservation and development. They presented their joint message at the COP 8 Local-Global Leaders Dialogue and codified it in a Community Declaration that can be found online ([click here](#)):

#### The Declaration calls on delegates of the CBD to:

- Recognize traditional knowledge and expertise of local communities
- Understand that 'sector-based' policies do not support integrated 'ecosystem-based' approaches at the local level
- Increasingly engage local communities in the decisions and work of the CBD
- Invest in building upon the capacity of local communities
- Help identify and secure sustainable financial mechanisms to support community action
- Develop strong multi-stakeholder partnerships

Also at the Community Taba, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) posterbook was launched. To help communities to celebrate their successes, share their knowledge, and, most importantly, inform policy, GTZ developed the idea for a book of community-generated posters showcasing their initiatives and their contributions to achieving the MDGs. In addition to the posterbook, delegates at the Taba participated in the launch of the MDG poster toolkit which describes how projects can be depicted in poster form, clearly showing MDG impacts. The launch of the toolkit and the creation of MDG posters at the Taba was very challenging and added excitement for the delegates who attended the session.

Community Taba participants went on two wonderful field trips: one through protected areas around Curitiba and another to a rural settlement in Cananéia. It was an exciting moment for the Taba participants to experience how oysters were reproduced and maintained by local farmers and, indeed, to learn more about the low and high tide of the moon. This outing took us to a community women's project. Here, I was really fascinated because at home in South Africa, we were in the initial stage of this very kind of a project. More than just a field visit - for me, this was an important learning opportunity.

I also attended official sessions of the COP 8 in the Main Hall. It was very interesting to listen to different working groups debate issues for submission and adoption. Issues were debated passionately and in great depth from the different viewpoints of the participants, but in the end we reached a global, common understanding that will be adopted for implementation. In fact, I accumulated tremendous experience in high-level global knowledge sharing. I had the opportunity to make presentations on my work at home and also to facilitate discussions amongst groups in the Taba. Due to time constraints of the official COP 8 proceedings, I missed an opportunity to deliver a joint statement with one of the volunteer "angels" to the delegates in the Main Hall to forge a way forward with regard to community participation in the CBD for the future. This would be a very progressive message to the global society and hopefully I will get an opportunity to present this statement at the next COP 9.

Most importantly, I made a friendship with global society and came to know that my experience needs to be shared with everyone else. I am also looking forward to the next round of the Local-Global Leaders Dialogue. My thanks to GTZ, the IUCN, the UN, the Equator Initiative, our spectacular hosts in Brazil, and everyone across the globe.



## A Rare Partner for the Equator Initiative

Two Equator Prize finalists will carry out conservation marketing campaigns over the next year with the Equator Initiative's newest partner, Rare ([www.rareconservation.org](http://www.rareconservation.org)). Applications are now being accepted for Equator Prize finalists to receive training and technical support in community outreach campaigns from Rare's Pride program.

**RARE**

Following the fruitful exchanges between the Equator Initiative and Rare that span collaborations from COP7 in Malaysia to the Community Taba in Curitiba in 2006, Rare has officially joined the EI partnership. An international non-profit conservation organization, Rare supports the efforts of local conservationists around the world to save magnificent natural landscapes and irreplaceable wildlife through social marketing campaigns, "edutainment" radio programs, and economic development solutions. Rare's proven ability and commitment to build deep connections between local communities and their natural environments strengthens the knowledge and outreach dimensions of the Equator Initiative.

Recognizing these skills in outreach, it is with great pleasure that we introduce our partnership with Rare by announcing the launch of two Equator Prize community Pride campaigns. Rare Pride campaigns utilize a charismatic flagship species, like the Saint Lucia parrot or the Philippine cockatoo, to symbolize local pride and act as a messenger to build support for habitat and wildlife protection. Campaigns appeal to people on an emotional level, generating an increased sense of connection and public stewardship that goes beyond mere awareness-raising to behavior and policy change.

The Pride program is a training and support program where, when selected, local conservationists attend a Pride training center for 11 weeks and learn how to run the campaign. They then return to their sites to implement the campaign for a year with support from Rare. One of the Equator Prize 2006 finalist communities, as well as one of the 53 finalist communities from 2002 and 2004 will be selected over the next few months to participate in this program.

Rare has grown tremendously since its founding thirty years ago. Today, Rare works with more than 120 grassroots and government-level conservationists to help communities connect with and become stewards of their rich natural surroundings. With its core mission to "protect wildlands of globally significant biodiversity by enabling local people to benefit from their preservation," Rare could not be a better match for the Equator Initiative partnership.

### About the Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative is a partnership designed to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the equatorial belt by fostering, supporting, and strengthening community partnerships.

The Equator Initiative undertakes work in four strategic areas related to community conservation and development and awards the biennial Equator Prize. This prize recognizes outstanding local efforts to advance biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction in the tropics. Nominations for the Equator Prize 2006 should be sent to the Equator Initiative by October 31. Further details are available on the Equator Initiative website.

### Equator Initiative Partners

Government of Canada  
Conservation International  
Convention on Biological Diversity  
Fordham University  
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ)  
IDRC - International Development Research Centre  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union  
Rare  
Television Trust for the Environment  
The Nature Conservancy  
United Nations Foundation  
United Nations Development Programme

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### Further Information

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