

Press release

Trees, Water & People named as 2008 Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability winner

9 June 2009

Rio Tinto and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) have announced Trees, Water & People, based in the United States (Colorado) and working in Central America, Haiti and the American West, as the 2008 winner of the US\$1 million Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability.

Trees, Water & People spokesperson Stuart Conway said he was delighted to accept the Prize at the 2009 International Economic Forum of the Americas (Conference of Montreal) in Montreal today.

“We are absolutely thankful, delighted and overwhelmed with gratitude at being announced the 2008 Prize winner. We now have the opportunity to expand our community reforestation and improved cook stove programmes in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti. In particular, we will look to use the Prize to leverage additional sources of funding, and increasingly share the work we are doing with other interested organisations,” he said.

Trees, Water & People is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1998. The organisation develops and manages community reforestation, watershed protection, renewable energy, environmental education, and carbon offset programmes in countries including Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and the United States. More information about Trees, Water & People can be found at www.treeswaterpeople.org.

Rio Tinto Global head of Health, Safety and Environment Dr Elaine Dorward-King said the Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability was designed to recognise and reward not-for-profit, civil society and non-government organisations for significant contributions to the goals of economic, environmental and social sustainability.

“We congratulate Trees, Water & People co-founders Stuart Conway and Richard Fox, employees and all Trees, Water & People partner organisations and networks on being awarded the 2008 Prize. To win this international award is a real achievement and testament to the work that Trees, Water & People is doing on the ground to balance today’s needs with those of future generations,” she said.

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Chairman of the Prize Adjudication Panel, Director of Guelph Institute for the Environment, University of Guelph, Canada, and Former Minister for Environment in Canada, David Anderson said the work being undertaken by Trees, Water & People embodied the spirit of the Prize.

“On behalf of the Adjudication Panel, we are pleased that the work that Trees, Water & People is already doing with local communities on two continents to protect, conserve, and manage the natural resources upon which their long term wellbeing depends will now be boosted with the award of the Rio Tinto Prize for Sustainability 2008,” he said.

To facilitate an inclusive, rigorous and transparent management process for the award of the Prize, Rio Tinto partners with the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) which manages the entries and selection process. IBLF engages independent sustainability experts from around the world to ensure the process and decisions are made in an objective and consistent manner. Rio Tinto does not participate in the assessment process.

IBLF chief executive Adam Leach said the diversity of the organisations short listed for the Prize in 2008 demonstrated the breadth of work being undertaken locally throughout the world to contribute to global sustainable development.

“All ten short listed organisations in 2008 highlighted the depth and range of talent, initiative and skills that exist in the civil society sector. We look forward to working with all nine remaining finalists over the coming year to support them in applying their US\$15,000 training grant to invest in training and capacity building opportunities for their organisations,” he added.

Further information about the short listed organisations can be found at www.riotintoprizeforsustainability.com. Rio Tinto adopted the US\$1 million Prize for Sustainability following its acquisition of Alcan in 2007. Previous winners of the Prize for Sustainability include the Forest Stewardship Council (Germany) www.fsc.org, Aga Khan Planning and Building Services Pakistan www.akdn.org/akpbs, the Barefoot College (India) www.barefootcollege.org and Utthan Centre for Sustainable Development & Poverty Alleviation (India) www.sietalld.org.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed public company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is a public company listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

About International Business Leaders Forum

The International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which works with business, governments and civil society to enhance the contribution that companies can make to sustainable development. Since 1990, IBLF has worked in over 90 countries. Current areas of work include raising sustainable business standards, improving prospects for enterprise and employment, and enabling companies to contribute to health and human development issues. IBLF provides strategic counsel to companies to enable them to understand and respond to the development challenges that they face, particularly when operating in transition and emerging economies.

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