



Blue Ventures Conservation Press Release

The Village of Andavadoaka announced as Winner of the UNDP Equator Prize

***In recognition of outstanding community efforts for poverty
reduction and biodiversity conservation***

27 May 2007

The Village of Andavadoaka, Madagascar, was honoured today at the United Nations Headquarters in New York by the Equator Prize, an international recognition of extraordinary work to diminish poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The prestigious prize serves to further advance the understanding within the global community of the vital link between healthy, biologically diverse environments and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

The remote community of Andavadoaka, Madagascar has been acknowledged for its work in partnership with UK-based NGO Blue Ventures Conservation developing community-run marine protected areas in the remote southwest of the country. It is a fantastic achievement for Andavadoaka to have been selected from a group of 25 finalists, chosen from more than 300 nominations from 70 different countries.

Represented by community members Georges Manahira and Daniel Raberinery of Blue Ventures, the village will receive international recognition at an Awards Ceremony in Berlin, Germany on World Environment Day, 5th June 2007.

"Over recent years, Blue Ventures Conservation has worked closely with the village of Andavadoaka in protecting some of Madagascar's most critical and threatened marine areas," said Dr. Iary Berthine Ravaoarimanana, Madagascar's ambassador in London. "This unique partnership is working to ensure that Madagascar's incredible marine resources remain healthy and productive for generations to come."

UNDP Administrator Kemal Derviş said of the winners, "The proliferation and scaling up of efforts such as these is critical to the achievement of our common goals to conserve biodiversity, respond to climate change and achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

In addition to international recognition for its work and an opportunity to help shape international policy and practice in the field, the community of Andavadoaka will receive US \$30,000 to support local development initiatives.

"The Equator Prize recognizes the devoted work of men and women to the cause of saving our planet from ecological disasters. Through their work, they are demonstrating that good ecology is also good business. Thus they serve as torch



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bearers of the movement for sustainable human happiness," noted Professor M.S. Swaminathan, Equator Prize jury member and former president of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of India.

About Blue Ventures

Blue Ventures is an award-winning London-based not-for-profit dedicated to working with local communities to conserve threatened marine habitats and resources for the betterment of people and nature. Funded almost entirely through ecotourism revenue, Blue Ventures brings paying volunteers to project sites and trains them in scientific research, community outreach and on-the-ground conservation.

Blue Ventures has won national and international recognition for its work. In 2005 Blue Ventures became the first European organisation to receive the SEED Award sponsored by the United Nations and the World Conservation Union to find the most innovative and entrepreneurial partnerships for sustainable development. In 2004 and 2006, Blue Ventures received "Highly Commended" honours from the Responsible Tourism Awards. In 2006, Skai, the world's largest organisation of travel and tourism professionals, named Blue Ventures winner of its International Ecotourism Award.

About the Equator Initiative

Launched on 30 January 2002, the Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, civil society, business, governments and communities to help build the capacity and raise the profile of grassroots efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The world's greatest concentrations of biological wealth are found in equatorial regions, in countries that also have some of the highest levels of poverty. The Equator Initiative champions and supports community efforts to link economic development and income generation with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

For more information, please visit <http://www.EquatorInitiative.org> or <http://www.blueventures.org>

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