

PRESS RELEASE (Embargo: January 23, 2008, 15:00)

Davos, January 23, 2008

Public Eye Denounces Areva and Glencore, Praises Hess Natur

At the gates of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Berne Declaration (BD) and Pro Natura have once again selected the year's most *irresponsible* corporations. The French atomic multinational *Areva* and the Zug-based natural resources giant *Glencore* were sentenced this week with an anti-award for particularly nasty corporate behavior. *Areva* also received the public "worst of" award, determined by online voting. *Hess Natur*, a German mail-order firm for organic textiles, was the proud winner of the Public Eye Positive Award. In his opening address, National Assembly member Bastien Girod proposed groundbreaking ideas for the state sponsorship of the political consumer.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world once again nominated roughly 40 Swiss and non-Swiss corporations for one of the three Public Eye Awards. The two negative awards stand as examples of all those WEF members and large companies whose social and/or environmental behavior reveals the underbelly of a purely profit-driven globalization. In contrast, the Positive Award honors an exemplary corporate initiative.

The nuclear concern **Areva S.A.** received the Public Eye Global Award. The French state-owned company mines uranium in northern Niger under scandalous conditions: Mine workers are not informed about health risks, and analysis shows radioactive contamination of air, water and soil. In his address, Almoustapha Alhacen, president of the local organization Aghirin'man that represents those affected, spoke of "suspicious deaths among the workers, caused by radioactive dust and contaminated groundwater."

The winner of the Public Eye Swiss Award is **Glencore**. The natural resources group, based in the tax haven of canton Zug, operates with a minimum of transparency and scruples. In Colombia, Glencore's coal mines have caused massive environmental pollution and health problems for the population. In addition, the top-selling Swiss corporation is extremely hostile towards unions. It was nominated by Funtraenergetica, the local union of the energy and mining sectors. Its lawyer, Sergio Beccera Moreno, spoke in Davos of infringements on the freedom of association, paramilitary training camps on the mine's property, and permanent social dumping.

Hess Natur received the Public Eye Positive Award for an organic cotton project in Burkina Faso, in collaboration with Swiss aid organization Helvetas. Delphine Zoungrana, responsible for organic farming for the National Union of Burkina Faso Cotton Producers, hopes for "more such initiatives for fair wages and non-toxic agriculture, so that one day all people can live with dignity."

The Public Eye People's Award was conferred for the first time. Receiving more than half of the over 10,000 online votes cast, the "winner" of this public ballot was once again Areva, followed by Bayer CropScience and Glencore. The new category and the decisive results show how closely the Public Eye reflects public opinion.

With the Public Eye, the Berne Declaration (BD) and Pro Natura have created – on location every year since 2000 – a **counter-discourse to the WEF**. Both NGOs are convinced that direct pressure is necessary to bring corporations to act with respect towards humankind and nature. Specifically, the NGOs call for legally-binding international regulations for corporate responsibility.

Further information (including Bastien Girod's speech) at www.evb.ch/publiceye or from:
Oliver Classen, the Berne Declaration, Tel. +41 (0)76 334 25 42, publiceye@evb.ch
Sonja Ribí, Pro Natura, Tel. +41 (0)79 216 02 06, sonja.ribi@pronatura.ch