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## INNOVATIVE BUSINESS APPROACH HELPS PROVIDE CLEAN ENERGY TO WORLD'S NEEDIEST

### Report Finds NGOs and Entrepreneurs Can Work Together to Jumpstart and Sustain New Energy Enterprises

(Johannesburg, South Africa) – A report jointly released today by the United Nations Foundation and the UN Environment Program (UNEP), at the World Summit on Sustainable Development details how an innovative approach is bringing affordable, clean, and efficient energy services to rural communities in Africa, Brazil and China.

The report, “*Open for Business: Entrepreneurs, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development*,” details the findings of the \$8.6 million effort between the UN Foundation and the UNEP. Their partnership with U.S. non-profit clean energy investor E+Co and a number of local NGOs, called the **Rural Energy Enterprise Development** initiative, or **REED**, combines small amounts of start-up capital with extensive enterprise development services to help new entrepreneurs create clean energy enterprises in Brazil, China and five African countries. In Africa, these new enterprises are offering energy efficient cook stoves, windpump repair services, the supply and service of solar home systems and energy efficiency services.

“The UN Foundation and UNEP have invested considerable resources in this effort because we believe that new and innovative approaches such as REED are needed to *simultaneously* address the multitude of development and environment challenges facing many of the world’s poorest countries,” said Timothy E. Wirth, President of the UN Foundation.

Many of the world’s poorest communities still rely on traditional forms of energy, mostly woodfuels, dung and crop wastes. These energy resources are often expensive, inefficient, and damaging to the health of humans and the environment. The resulting pollution is estimated to cost \$150 – \$750 billion per year globally. “The economic burden of this pollution is staggering,” according to United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director, Klaus Toepfer, “we believe that it is the cause of 4-5 percent of the global burden of disease and is one of the leading causes of childhood and infant mortality.”

Mr Wirth and Mr Toepfer both emphasized the potential to duplicate REED efforts in other parts of the world as another “tool” to help rural communities provide the energy for sustainable development.

**Report / Media Kit:** <http://www.unep.org/energy/areed>  
**Website:** <http://www.unep.org/wssd>