

4 September 2003

HSBC adopts the Equator Principles

HSBC has adopted the *Equator Principles* to help the Group assess the environmental and social impact of commercial lending proposals. This will reinforce the bank's long established environmental and social risk evaluation process and its position as one of the leading companies in environmental impact management.

The Equator Principles are a set of voluntary guidelines, developed by major international banks, that establish a common framework to address the environmental and social issues that arise in financing projects and ensure that they are realised according to sound environmental management practices.

In 1992 HSBC became a founder signatory of the United Nations Environment Programme's Statement by Financial Institutions on the Environment and Sustainable Development. In 2001 it became a corporate member of the United Nations Global Compact which challenges companies to demonstrate progress in supporting and advancing its principles in three areas, labour standards, human rights and environmental responsibility.

HSBC's *Investing in Nature* programme, a \$50 million partnership with WWF, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and Earthwatch, demonstrates its commitment to the environment. It will clean up three of the world's major rivers, benefiting 50 million people who depend upon them, help save 20,000 rare plant species from extinction, train 200 scientists and send 2,000 staff on vital conservation research projects worldwide.

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Notes to editors:**HSBC Holdings plc**

With some 9,500 offices in 79 countries and territories and assets of US\$983 billion at 30 June 2003, the HSBC Group is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

Investing in Nature: For more information on HSBC's Investing in Nature partnership with WWF, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), and Earthwatch please visit www.investinginnature.org

The Equator Principles were introduced in May 2003 and are supported by a number of financial institutions. Adoption of the Principles is entirely voluntary and applies to all projects where capital investment is over US\$50 million.

www.equator-principles.com