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## **Canadian Hydro Spearheads Safe, Clean Lighting for Wechiau Communities in Ghana, West Africa**

**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**October 25, 2004**

**Calgary, Canada**—Canadian Hydro presents the first Wechiau Lighting Initiative Fundraiser on October 25 in partnership with University of Calgary-based Light Up the World Foundation and the Calgary Zoo Conservation Fund. The Wechiau Lighting Initiative aims to provide 550 solar powered lighting units to the 10,000 people living near the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary in Ghana, West Africa by April, 2005.

The Calgary Zoo Conservation Fund has been financially supporting this unique community-protected conservation project from its inception in 1996. The Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary is in an area with 17 villages, seven schools and two health clinics located on the Black Volta River. The sanctuary is a full day's rugged journey north of Ghana's capital city, Accra, and houses one of two populations of hippos in West Africa, where the animals are nearly extinct.

Today, the reserve is about 40 kilometres long. The villagers have moved all farms and fishing camps two kilometres from the river, minimizing human and hippo conflict and providing undisturbed grazing habitat for the hippos. Notwithstanding this disruption to their subsistence economy, the people in the area support the project because they understand that by conserving the environment, they are creating other opportunities for their community, including the increasingly popular trend of eco-tourism.

"As a leader in the Canadian renewable energy industry, we believe in a balanced approach to conservation and development," says Canadian Hydro CEO, John Keating. "We support the significant commitment demonstrated by the people of the Wechiau communities to the sustainable development of their region. We believe everyone should have access to clean, safe and affordable lighting. Currently, many people in third world countries, including Ghana, use crude kerosene-fueled lamps, which are dangerous, dirty and expensive. Half the people at Wechiau are children who need safe lighting to encourage literacy. There is great enthusiasm in Ghana for the project and a strong desire to move forward."

Canadian Hydro is proud to be associated with another Calgary based group, the Light Up the World Foundation, which brings an innovative approach to design and fabrication of clean, simple and safe lighting systems for third world communities, using solar power. The Calgary Zoo and the Nature Conservation Research Centre in Accra, Ghana are providing project management and logistical support.

Canadian Hydro Developers, Inc. is Canada's premier independent developer of EcoLogo™ certified low impact renewable energy. Publicly listed since 1990, the company owns and operates thirteen green power facilities. Wind generated electricity accounts for three sites and hydroelectric power, ten sites. Canadian Hydro's first biomass plant is now nearing completion. Canadian Hydro supports a portfolio approach that embraces all forms of renewable energy, including biomass, wind and run of river hydro.

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