

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Paul Heinbecker
on the occasion of the Launch of the Equator Initiative
Guggenheim Museum, January 30, 2002.**

Mr. Malloch-Brown,
Mr. Wirth,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much.

My congratulations on selecting such a magnificent and very appropriate venue for this Rio to Johannesburg event.

I will be very brief.

I just wanted to confirm the support of the Government of Canada for this important initiative.

Canada hosts, in Montreal, the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

We have observed over the years, since the Convention was signed at Rio, that our global conservation objectives are indeed impaired by poverty in many equatorial countries.

We also believe that sustainable use of biological resources, through effective community-based partnerships, can go a long way towards reducing such poverty.

Canada is proud to be a charter partner in the Equator Initiative.

With our Canadian colleagues in IDRC, we look forward to collaboration with UNDP and other partners.

We anticipate that the Equator Initiative will be a signal event at Johannesburg.

We hope and believe it will stimulate the action needed to help address the objectives of the Biodiversity Convention and redeem an important part of the promise of Agenda 21.

Thank you.