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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water For People Wins \$200,000 Development Marketplace Award From World Bank

(Washington, DC)—May 23, 2007—Water For People was awarded the maximum grant of \$200,000 for an innovative sanitation project in Malawi designed to reduce the incidence of diarrhea through hygiene education, the use of children's latrines, and the production of compost for sale.

Financed by The World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the global Development Marketplace grants range from \$50,000 to \$200,000. The event is held by The World Bank every 12 to 18 months and brings proposal finalists to Washington, D.C., for final review by a jury of World Bank officials and development professionals. This year's focus was health, nutrition, and population.

Water For People's proposal, which was the work of a number of staff members and Malawian partners, was one of 104 finalists selected from more than 2,900 applications. Only 22 awards were granted this year.

The overall goal of the Water For People proposal is to reduce diarrhea by 40% in two rural Malawian traditional authorities, including 31 schools and more than 100 villages, by improving sanitation practices and facilities. The multifaceted approach targets toddlers and young children by promoting the use of ecological latrines while eliminating open defecation common in the region. The program includes the distribution of child-size "arbor-loos" that allow children to defecate safely and then, when the pit latrine is full, they can plant a tree and move the toilet to another location. The program also includes a component targeted at adults, where latrines are constructed that can transform fecal waste from a health threat to valuable compost which is then sold. The program uses children as agents of change at school and in the household, a model that has proven effective for promoting long-term changes in health and hygiene practices.

The program will create an unsubsidized, sustainable sanitation service that can be replicated by others. It will also creatively link local government, NGOs, and the private sector to improve health. With this award, the program will become a reality.

Ned Breslin, Director of International Programs for Water For People and Kate Harawa, Water For People Country Coordinator for Malawi, defended the proposal to two jury committees and two independent jurors.

“We competed in an environment in which many jurors at the World Bank felt that water and sanitation should not be included in this year’s competition,” says Breslin. “Instead, it was felt that awards should be offered to more traditional health interventions, like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and immunization. Our selection suggests that our work really stood out, as it offered a unique way to tackle diarrhea which is the second largest killer of children worldwide. It also suggests that the centrality of water and sanitation to improved health is understood.”

Each marketplace includes a “knowledge exchange” forum that allows finalists to share their approaches and best practices with representatives of the international development community through discussions and seminars. World Bank staff, sector experts, potential funders and investors, development specialists, and members of the public were invited to attend.

About Water For People

Founded in 1991, Water For People is a Denver-based private, nonprofit international development organization that supports safe drinking water and sanitation projects in developing countries. Water For People partners with communities and other nongovernmental organizations to help people improve their quality of life by supporting sustainable drinking water, sanitation and health and hygiene projects. Water For People supports projects with professional development advice, financial support and volunteer technical services. Typical projects include protected spring-fed community water systems, gravity-fed systems, wells with hand pumps, latrine construction, operator training and health and hygiene education. Water For People is currently working in Latin America, Africa and Asia. In 2006, Water For People supported the provision of safe and sustainable drinking water resources and/or sanitation facilities benefiting more than 98,000 people in the developing world. More information is available at www.waterforpeople.org.