

25 May 2011

## HSBC employees planting trees for the World Biodiversity Day

On the eve of the World Biodiversity Day, **18 HSBC colleagues volunteered** to clean, weed and replant endemic plants at the pristine Chamarel Ebony Forest, one of our remaining endemic forests. The event came in line with this year's **World Environment Day theme, "Forests: Nature at your Service"**.

*"At HSBC, sustainability means achieving sustained profits for our shareholders, developing long-lasting customer relationships, valuing our highly committed employees and managing the social and environmental impact of our business. We believe that getting involved in the activities we support, gives the projects a better chance to succeed, this is why colleagues are encouraged to participate in many diverse activities each year"* says **Amélie Desvaux de Marigny, Manager Corporate Sustainability and Public Affairs**.

The HSBC volunteers got the unique chance to visit one of the most beautiful spots of our island. From the foot of Piton Mountain to its highest flank, where all were breath-taken by the splendid view of Riviere Noire seen from above. Le Morne seemed within touching distance and Ilot Benitier as a beautiful green retreat.

Mr Jean Claude Sevathian, scientist from the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation was part of the journey, providing his knowledge and experience on the importance of preserving our endemic plants and forests. More than 50 endemic plants were planted by the HSBC volunteers, including bois chandelle, bois chenille, bois clou, baume indigène, bois de rat and a rare Trochetia boutoniana, our national flower.

The team had the great privilege to see a 'Coq des Bois', which no staff had ever seen before.

Avanish Sultanti from the Marketing department said enthusiastically: "It was great to get out of the office and do something meaningful."

HSBC has had an active commitment to the environment for many years. In 2005, HSBC became the world's first carbon neutral bank. HSBC believes it is the responsibility of governments, businesses and individuals to recognise the challenge of climate change and to play their part in minimising the impacts, now and in the future.

In 2007, HSBC launched a US\$90 million, five-year programme to reduce the environmental footprint of office buildings and business operations. Major actions include: introducing renewable energy technologies; developing flagship buildings to recognised environmental standards; changing behaviour through training; raising employee awareness and developing flexible work practices; and optimising operations through environmental management systems.

An example of greening HSBC's supply chain is usage of multifunction all-in-one devices to replace old printers, copiers, scanners and fax machines. This energy- and waste-saving print management initiative helped reduce the amount of equipment, consumption of electricity, toner cartridges and paper, and maintenance cost. Employees are also invited to join recycling programme. With the support of HSBC Internet Banking service, the bank is planning to significantly reduce its printing outcomes for customers as well.

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HSBC today formally adopts The Climate Principles a framework for climate change best practice for the financial sector. The Climate Principles will not only guide operational greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments, but also provide strategic direction across the full range of financial products and services including research, asset management, retail banking, corporate banking, investment banking and project finance. It is intended to align with, and build on, existing initiatives to ensure a consistent and effective approach to addressing climate change.

In 2006, HSBC played a major role with other leading financial service companies and the International Finance Corporation to re-launch the Equator Principles (EPs) - global environmental and social guidelines for project finance.

This upgraded the social and environmental standards applying to financing projects and requiring greater transparency of reporting. The EPs have been re-adopted by 52 financial institutions representing more than US\$50 billion or 80 per cent of global project financing.

Since 2004, HSBC has introduced Sector Guidelines to cover lending and financial services with potentially high environmental or social impacts. These set out internationally accepted standards to be followed when we lend to or invest in companies or projects in industry sectors such as forestry, freshwater infrastructure, chemicals, energy, metals and mining, and specify areas where involvement is prohibited.

Climate change is not just an environmental issue, but an economic and social one and one that has an impact on HSBC's business strategy.

To better understand the socio-economic implications of climate change, HSBC has appointed Lord Nicholas Stern - a world authority on the economics of climate change - as Special Adviser to the Group Chairman on Economic Development and Climate Change.

We have also established the Climate Change Centre of Excellence in Bangalore, India to assess business risks and opportunities arising from climate change for the benefit of the Group's business and clients.

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#### **Notes to editors:**

##### **1. The HSBC**

In Mauritius, HSBC operates two entities - as a branch of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited and as a locally incorporated subsidiary, HSBC Bank (Mauritius) Limited. Through its 11 full-service domestic branches, HSBC offers a wide range of products and services including accounts services, credit cards, investment products, home loans, personal loans and custodian services to domestic customers. HSBC is the leading bank in the Mauritius Global Business sector and offers its global customers sophisticated financial products and structures that benefit from the extensive range of international tax treaties to which Mauritius is a party. It has been present in Mauritius since 1916.

##### **2. The HSBC Group**

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited is the founding and a principal member of the HSBC Group which, with around 7,500 offices in 87 countries and territories and assets of US\$2,455 billion at 31 December 2010, is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.