



Solar Electric Light Fund

PRESS RELEASE

Solar Electric Light Fund among global innovators honored as finalists for 2002 Tech Museum of Innovation Award

WASHINGTON, DC – September 30, 2002 – From among 460 nominees worldwide, the Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) has been named one of 25 finalists for a 2002 Tech Museum of Innovation Award. SELF is one of five "Laureates" in the award's Equality category.

All 25 Laureates will be honored on November 7 at a black tie Awards Gala in Silicon Valley, attended by high tech leaders and delegates from the United Nations. The gala will culminate with presentation of a \$50,000 cash honorarium to one Laureate in each of five categories.

The Solar Electric Light Fund was nominated by physicist and Templeton Prize-winner Freeman Dyson, who particularly cited SELF's bold work in rural South Africa. As a legacy of apartheid, thousands of schools serving rural blacks still lack electricity. In very poor KwaZulu-Natal Province, SELF helped Myeka High School acquire solar power not only for lighting, TVs and VCRs, but also satellite Internet access. The benefits have been dramatic, with sharp gains in enrollment, test scores, graduation rates, and students going on to college. "I never thought the sun could do all this," Headmaster Melusi Zwane told *The New York Times*. "It's the reason for all that we have now. Everything comes from power."

In announcing the 2002 Laureates, the Tech Museum also took note of SELF's decade of achievement in a dozen other developing countries, including a recent effort in Brazil. There, SELF teamed with Caboclo Indians to bring solar electricity to the richly biodiverse Xixuaú-Xipariná Ecological Reserve deep in the Amazon rainforest. The new solar array powers satellite Internet access for distance learning, telemedicine, and scientific research, along with lights, a water pump, and a refrigerator for vaccines and snakebite anti-venom. "The project has revolutionized life here in the Reserve," says Joao Soarez Gomez, a tribal elder.

The annual Tech Museum of Innovation Awards are presented in partnership with the American Council for the United Nations University and Santa Clara University's Center for Science, Technology, and Society. The awards honor individuals and organizations from around the world who are applying technology to profoundly improve the human condition in the categories of Education, Equality, Environment, Health, and Economic Development.

This year, a panel of distinguished judges considered over 460 nominations, representing 59 countries. The 25 Tech Laureates for 2002 come from Argentina, Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United States.

"Collectively our Laureates address some of the world's most pressing challenges," observes Peter Giles, Tech Museum President and CEO. "These stories and the incredible impact of these innovators will help us achieve our goal of inspiring future scientists, technologists, and dreamers to harness the tremendous power and promise of technology to solve the global challenges that confront us today."

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"The point of The Tech Museum Awards is to not only recognize great innovators for their achievements, but to also provide the tools to replicate and spread their technologies to benefit others around the world," comments Jim Morgan, Chairman and CEO of Applied Materials, Inc, a sponsor of the awards.

For more information on the awards and finalists, visit www.techawards.thetech.org.

About the Solar Electric Light Fund

The Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) helps rural, off-grid people in developing countries power a brighter future through clean, renewable energy and modern communications. SELF's projects are shaped by local priorities and led by local people — often women — and address critical needs in homes, schools, clinics, agriculture, and microenterprise. Formed in 1990, SELF has mounted high-impact projects in thirteen developing nations. Its efforts and those of its project partners have earned honors including the Green Cross Millennium and Energy Globe Awards, and notice in diverse publications including *The New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Strategy + Business*, *WorldWatch*, *The Futurist*, and *Science et Vie*, as well as stories on CNN, CBS Radio, and NPR. Learn more at www.self.org.

About the Tech Museum of Innovation

The Tech is a museum uniquely focused on technology — how it works and how it is changing every aspect of the way we work, live, play, and learn. Its people-and-technology focus, and the integration of advanced technologies into visitor experiences, distinguish it from other science centers. The 132,000 square feet of The Tech are shared by four major theme galleries packed full of one-of-a-kind exhibits, the Hackworth IMAX Dome Theater, an educational center for workshops and labs, a café, and a retail store featuring books, gifts, and only-in-Silicon Valley items. The annual Tech Museum of Innovation Awards honor innovators around the world who are harnessing technology to profoundly improve the human condition. Learn more at www.thetech.org.

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