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Press Release

Official Launch of Environment for Development Tanzania

28 January 2008

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Environment for Development Tanzania (EfDT) is a new initiative, based at the economics department at the University of Dar es Salaam. EfDT has been set up as part of the Environment for Development (EfD) initiative, an international network that is currently funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

EfD identifies the environment as an important resource for development rather than a constraint. Its overall objective is to support poverty alleviation and sustainable development through increased use of environmental economics in the policy making process. To achieve this EfD is building capacity in environmental economics, focusing on research, policy advice and teaching in Central America, China, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania.

EfD research fellows are environmental economists who undertake international research collaboration on poverty-environment issues. This includes identifying underlying problems, valuing the environmental impact and proposing efficient solutions. We use policy instrument analysis, non-market valuation, behavioral and experimental economics as tools for research on management of natural resources, climate change and environmental policy.

EfD fellows strive to build a bridge between research, and policy planning and decision making. Currently there is typically a gap between academic research and governments'

policy formulation. These two areas of work rarely meet or influence each other. This is a missed opportunity. The EfD initiative strives to build strong policy advice, which is research based and relevant for policy planning and implementation in developing countries. By developing and strengthening research-based policy advice, the EfD research and training components may have synergetic effects and may have a wider use than otherwise would have been the case.

Academic training is fundamental for domestic capacity building in environmental economics. The EfD initiative supports national graduate programs in environmental economics at all EfD Centers. With funds from Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, PhD candidates from developing countries are also trained in environmental economics at the Environmental Economics Unit, Gothenburg University.

EfD Tanzania's goal is to support poverty alleviation and sustainable development through the increased use of environmental economics capacity in policy making processes. Specific objectives include: Increasing the number of trained environmental economists in Tanzania by creating a conducive working environment through, for example, the provision of research grants for MA and PhD students writing in environment and poverty; Strengthening the capacity of environmental economics and economics graduates to do applied research that addresses poverty and the environment by linking research fellows with international research organisations and enabling them to participate in international and national conferences.

While the link between poverty and the environment has long been recognised, there remain several gaps between research institutions and policy makers in the environmental policy arena. These are gaps that EfD Tanzania aims to fill. Four key gaps that at present preclude sustainable poverty alleviation in Tanzania are:

A capacity gap – there are not enough trained environmental economists

An analytical gap – there is not sufficient applied research carried out on poverty and the environment

A communications gap – existing academic knowledge and findings have not been communicated to policy makers and civil servants

An institutional gap - there is no institutional platform to ensure that Tanzania-based academics are working with policy makers in addressing pressing environmental and poverty concerns

EfD Tanzania is working towards creating a forum where academics, policy makers, and other stakeholders set the research agenda together to address critical environmental and poverty issues. It supports researchers in collecting data and undertaking research and analysis on impact assessment, environmental management, and poverty reduction. It engages in disseminating its findings to a wide range of stakeholders through workshops, conferences, internal seminars, distribution of research publications and policy briefs, and building capacity of civil servants and other stakeholders.

The coordinator of EfD Tanzania is Dr Razack Lokina, a lecturer at the Department of Economics, University of Dar es Salaam, who obtained his PhD from Gothenburg University, Sweden. Other research fellows at the centre are Dr Adolf Mkenda, Dr John Mduma, and Dr Elizabeth Robinson. Ms Neema Yobu is the project administrator