

*For Immediate Release: June 22, 2005*

*Contacts: John Rogers/Richard Hansen, Soluz, Inc. +1.978.251.5290, www.SoluzUSA.com  
Harish Hande, SELCO Solar Light (India), +91-80-26493144/145, www.selco-india.com*

## **INDIA MEETING LAUNCHES RURAL ENERGY BUSINESS ALLIANCE Leading Entrepreneurs Focus on Key Barriers, Energy Access Scale-Up**

Leading rural energy entrepreneurs from developing countries last week launched a mutual-support alliance on concluding a five-day gathering in southern India, aimed at strengthening understanding of the role of the private sector in expanding rural energy access.

The June 13-17 “South-South REDCO Exchange” brought together leading entrepreneurs from around the world to focus on the role of private rural energy delivery companies (REDCOs) in expanding service to rural areas, particularly with solar energy. The members of the newly formed *REDCO Alliance* concluded their inaugural meeting with a decision to proceed under a formal working arrangement for mutual support and joint rural energy initiatives.

During the gathering, the participants exchanged experiences and explored strategies for supporting rural energy efforts, including addressing key barriers of financing for the companies and their clients, and supporting innovations to serve the rural poor.

After several days of interaction, the attendees elected to join formally as the “REDCO Alliance,” chose initial areas of focus, and elected an initial steering committee.

The 12 companies represented in the Exchange combined have been responsible for installations, primarily solar, in over 160,000 households and service to over 1,000,000 beneficiaries, while providing employment for over 1,700 people.

A primary goal of the Alliance, the members agreed, is to reach a combined 750,000 rural households with energy services by the year 2010, and to support a range of initiatives to broaden access to energy.

The meeting, the first of its kind, took place in Dharmasthala, a rural temple complex in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. The organizers chose the region for the gathering because of the presence of pioneering organizations involved in promoting sustainable rural energy solutions, particularly solar energy systems for domestic use, notably SELCO Solar Light, based in Karnataka’s capital, Bangalore, and a SELCO partner organization based in Dharmasthala.

Along with working sessions in Dharmasthala, the Exchange included visits to SELCO customers and a SELCO service center, and participation by representatives of micro-finance institutions and a leading Indian manufacturer.

“We are very pleased with the outcome of the meeting,” said Dr. Harish Hande, SELCO founder and Managing Director and one of the meeting organizers. “The experiences represented were some of the best in the world, and the discussions among the participants were very open and informative.”

“We’re excited to see this group of rural energy leaders come together,” said Richard Hansen, President of Soluz Dominicana in the Dominican Republic and its parent, Soluz, Inc., and another meeting organizer.

The meeting included representatives of REDCOs in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, India, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, along with other select participants.

###

***Countries represented, participants, and affiliations***

- ***Bangladesh*** - Dipal Barua, Grameen Bank
- ***Bolivia*** - Eduardo Lozada, Enersol
- ***Dominican Republic*** - Richard Hansen, Soluz Dominicana
- ***Honduras*** - John Rogers, Soluz Honduras
- ***India*** - H. Harish Hande, SELCO Solar Light Pvt. Ltd.
- ***Morocco*** - Juergen Gehr, Afrisol S.A
- ***Nepal*** - Adam Friedensohn, Lotus Energy
- ***Nicaragua*** - Vladimir Delagneau, Technosol
- ***Philippines*** - Silver Navarro, Solar Electric Company Inc.
- ***South Africa*** - Rolf Niemand, RAPS
- ***Tanzania*** - Mohamedrafik Parpia, Zara Solar Ltd.
- ***Uganda*** - Henry Nganwa, Incafex Ranches Ltd.
- ***Global*** - Titus Brenninkmeijer, Solgenix
- ***Global*** - Wendy Aulakh, Winrock International