



For immediate release

## **The founder of *Cirque du Soleil* launches a global foundation to deal with access to water issues**

**Montreal, Monday, October 29, 2007** — Guy Laliberté announced today, in the presence of Prince Albert II of Monaco, Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of Oxfam International, and Gordon Nixon, President and Chief Executive Officer of RBC, the official launch of the ONE DROP Foundation to fight poverty in the world by giving everyone access to water.

“No one can remain indifferent when we know that at least every eight seconds, a child dies from a disease caused by drinking contaminated water,” said Guy Laliberté. “With the creation of ONE DROP, we want to mobilize people everywhere in the world to find sustainable solutions to the problem of access to water, and to adopt better practices for the use of this precious resource.”

Access to water is one of the planet’s most pressing issues. Over a billion people do not have access to water in sufficient quantity or adequate quality. Almost half of the world’s population drinks untreated water.

Inspired by the creative experience of *Cirque du Soleil* and its international program for street kids, Cirque du Monde, the ONE DROP Foundation makes use of the circus arts, folklore, popular theatre, music, dance and the visual arts to promote education, community involvement and public awareness of water issues. Technical projects in developing countries will improve access to water, ensure food security and promote gender equality in communities. The Foundation will unveil its program for developed countries in 2008.

The operating costs of ONE DROP will be covered by a \$100 million contribution from Guy Laliberté over 25 years. Field activities will be financed by donations from the employees of *Cirque du Soleil* and from the public, as well as through funding commitments by Canadian and international partners.

Oxfam International, through Oxfam-Québec, has been associated with ONE DROP since 2005 in a three-year pilot project in Nicaragua. A leader in development aid, Oxfam brings expertise in selecting and implementing field projects.

“Water is central to many health and agricultural issues and to the development of communities throughout the world,” said Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of Oxfam International. “Our involvement with the ONE DROP Foundation is based on a common desire to support sustainable development with concrete actions and in collaboration with local partners.”

RBC announced a \$10 million commitment over ten years to support ONE DROP projects in Canada and around the world. The leading financial services company in Canada, RBC employs approximately 70,000 people in 34 countries. This is the largest donation ever given to a single organization in RBC’s 138-year history.

“ONE DROP is the first grant recipient of our new RBC Blue Water Project, a program to support charitable organizations dedicated to improving water access, conservation, protection and education,” said Gordon Nixon, President and Chief Executive Officer of RBC. “We are proud to be associated with the ONE DROP Foundation to support projects that will ensure a better quality of life for communities in Canada and around the world.”

Active in the fields of climate change, biodiversity and water, the Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco is the first international organization to sign a collaboration agreement with ONE DROP.

“Water issues transcend the boundaries of countries and affect the whole of humanity,” said Prince Albert II of Monaco. “This is a major challenge of this century and it is essential that organizations throughout the world come together in a global movement of solidarity to ensure the preservation and better management of a resource that is both irreplaceable and fundamental to life.”

The ONE DROP Foundation is based at the *Cirque du Soleil* International Headquarters in Montreal (Canada).

To know more, please visit [www.onedrop.org](http://www.onedrop.org)

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