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## **“The Public Eye Awards 2005” go to Dow Chemical, Shell, Wal-Mart, KPMG and Nestlé**

On 26 January 2005, the opening day of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Berne Declaration and Pro Natura present the first “Public Eye Awards” to *irresponsible companies*. The laureates of the “Public Eye Awards” are: *The Dow Chemical Company, Royal Dutch/Shell Group, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. and KPMG International*. The Public’s Award goes to *Nestlé S.A.*

Swiss cabaret artist and actor **Patrick Frey** will be the presenter at the first Public Eye Awards Ceremony. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all over the world have nominated more than 20 transnational companies. The complete submission papers can be viewed online at [www.evb.ch/nominations.htm](http://www.evb.ch/nominations.htm). The supporting NGOs\* of the “Public Eye on Davos” selected four laureates from amongst the nominees. They are model cases for all the corporate groups that have excelled in socially and environmentally irresponsible behaviour. They reveal the negative impacts of economic globalisation.

The “Public Eye Award” in the **human rights category** goes to the US corporate **The Dow Chemical Company**. This company, which was nominated by Greenpeace Switzerland and the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal, refuses to assume responsibility for the consequences of the worldwide largest chemical disaster in Bhopal, India, which has caused more than 20,000 casualties.

The winner in the **environment category** is the **Royal Dutch/Shell Group**. Even though the corporate group has promised in the past to stop gas flaring in Nigeria, it is not willing to keep its commitment and continues flaring despite the adverse impacts on the local communities and the environment. In addition, the company has not cleaned up properly any of the numerous oil spills it caused in the Niger delta since 1956. Shell was nominated by Friends of the Earth Nigeria and Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

\*a project of: **Bern Declaration (coordination)**  
Pro Natura (FoE Switzerland), Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción, Corporate Europe Observatory, Focus on the Global South, International South Group Network, Tebtebba Foundation, Women in Development Europe, World Development Movement

The laureate of the **labour law category** is US retailing giant **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** which was nominated by the Clean Clothes Campaign. The working conditions in Wal-Mart's clothes supply factories in Africa and Asia are intolerable, ranging from excessive compulsory overtime to below subsistence level wages.

The winner in the **taxes category** is **KPMG International**. The accountancy and consulting corporate group with headquarters in Amsterdam has been developing tax minimising models and encouraging its clients to engage in aggressive tax avoidance. KPMG International was nominated by the Tax Justice Network.

People from all over the world voted on the "Public Eye" website for the most blatant case involving the lack corporate responsibility. Clear winner and thus **laureate of the Public's Award** is **Nestlé**. The Swiss food and beverages company is criticised for labour conflicts in Colombia and for its aggressive marketing methods for baby food, which jeopardizes breastfeeding. Nestlé was nominated by the Kampagne für Menschenrechte (Gewerkschaft Bau und Industrie, ATTAC, Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz-Kolumbien, Grua Suiza), by the Baby Milk Action/Nestlé Boycott Committee and by the Berne Declaration.

The Berne Declaration and Pro Natura are convinced that public discussion and pressure are needed in order to make corporate groups act in a responsible way. Being the beneficiaries of economic globalisation, they are urged to assume their responsibility and introduce sustainable business strategies instead of enforcing tough choices at the expense of human beings and the environment.

The theme of the WEF 2005, "Taking Responsibility for Tough Choices", has to be interpreted as requiring companies to meet the needs of society. Pro Natura and the Berne Declaration demand legally binding international rules for corporate accountability. The UN Global Compact and other voluntary initiatives are insufficient since they neither include rules for implementation nor monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

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