News Release

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Neelam Chhiber Awarded as India ' s Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2011

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Mumbai, India, 13 November 2011 – The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, a sister organization of the World Economic Forum, in partnership with the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation announced Neelam Chhiber, Managing Director, Indus Tree Crafts Foundation (ICF), as the winner of the 2011 India Social Entrepreneur of the Year award. The award was conferred in Mumbai at a ceremony attended by over 200 participants in the presence of Prithviraj Chavan, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Ashwani Kumar, Minister of State for Planning, Science, Technology and Earth Sciences of India, and Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman and Founder of the World Economic Forum.

More than 140 applicants entered the seventh annual " Social Entrepreneur of the Year " selection process for India, and four finalists emerged after several stages of rigorous assessment. An independent panel of pre-eminent judges met on 12 November to select the winner. This year ' s judges included Sudha Pillai, Member Secretary of the Planning Commission; Adi Godrej, Chairman of Godrej Group, Godrej Industries; Shobhana Bhartia, Member of Parliament, and Chairperson and Editorial Director of HT Media; Harish Hande, Managing Director of SELCO Solar Light and a Ramon Magsaysay Award Winner for year 2011; Rajiv Khandelwal, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Aajeevika Bureau and Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2010; and Mirjam Schöning, Head of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship.

The winner of the annual competition enters the Schwab Foundation ' s global community of more than 200 social innovators. Social Entrepreneurs are driven by their mission to create substantial social change, developing new products, services and models that benefit underserved communities. They pioneer role models of inclusive growth (see below).

Winner Profile

Neelam Chhiber, Founder, Indus Tree Crafts Foundation (brand Mother Earth), Bangalore (http://industreecrafts.com): Indus Tree connects rural artisan producers to urban consumer markets. Its partly producer-owned retail brand, Mother Earth, focuses on home furnishings, fashion and food. Indus Tree to date has trained over 10,000 artisans to invest their own working capital, and to develop into enterprising self-help groups.

The Finalists

Gyanesh Pandey of Husk Power Systems (HPS), Patna (http://www.huskpowersystems.com): HPS provides reliable, renewable and affordable electricity to rural populations. The company installs 25-100 kilowatt mini power plants, and connects village households on a pay-for-use basis. Electricity is generated using biomass waste, primarily rice husks. To date, HPS has successfully installed 70 power plants supplying electricity to more than 200,000 people in 350 villages across Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Sudesh Menon of Waterlife India, Hyderabad (http://www.waterlifeindia.com): More than 2,000 children in India die every day as a result of waterborne diseases. In fact, water in many states is affected by fluoride and arsenic contamination, which results in deformed bones, cancerous growths and even death. Utilizing clean technology, Waterlife provides safe water at an affordable price to 1.1 million underserved people today. Its operations also create entrepreneurship opportunities for local people.

Mathew Spacie of Magic Bus, Mumbai (http://www.magicbus.org): Magic Bus empowers and develops the life skills of underserved youth through sport. To date, over 250,000 young people aged 7-18 years in five states have benefitted from its value-shaping educational curriculum. The organization has also trained and continues to build upon a network of over 3,000 Community Sport Coaches and Youth Mentors to reinforce its impact.

Notes to Editors

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