Social Entrepreneurship emerging as a force in Africa

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Several social entrepreneurs in Africa have been identified as developing several innovative business models for schemes that could have large-scale social impact.

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship's Africa Regional Social Entrepreneurs 2009 Award recognises David Kuria, Chief Executive Officer, Ecotact, Kenya; Patrick Schofield, Chief Executive Officer, Streetwires Artists Collective, South Africa; Mitchell J. Besser and Gene Falk, Co-Founders of mothers2mothers, active in Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. The trio will join other leading social entrepreneurs at the World Economic Forum on Africa, on 10-12 June 2009.

This group of social entrepreneurs from across the African continent as well as others from Europe and Latin America will be active participants in the discussions at the forthcoming meeting. Their primary focus is not maximizing profit, but maximizing benefits for society and the environment. They develop innovative business models in energy efficiencies, education, waste management, health, education, youth and rural development, with a vision of large-scale impact.

“This crisis teaches us that we need to refocus the economy on serving society. It is these social entrepreneurs who show us the way to a sustainable future,” said Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum, and Founder, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs emphasize long-term sustainability instead of short-term gains. Their primary focus is to maximize benefits for society and the environment by implementing innovative approaches to the key challenges the world is facing. They operate social businesses or organizations that are a mixture of non-profits and for-profits.

The winners of the Social Entrepreneur Award for Africa 2009 will be presented with their awards by the Chairperson and Co-Founder of the Schwab Foundation, Mrs Hilde Schwab, at the Opening Plenary of the Africa meeting on 10 June 2009, in the presence of Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa; Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations (1997-2006); Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, World Bank, Washington DC, and the distinguished guests and participants of the World Economic Forum.

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, an affiliate organization of the World Economic Forum, conducts the search and selection of social entrepreneurs in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, India and South-East Asia. In South Africa, the Schwab Foundation partners with Ernst & Young’s World Entrepreneur Award for the selection of South African Social Entrepreneurs. It selects several social entrepreneurs annually from each region. Selected social entrepreneurs are connected to the world’s business, political and media leaders through the events and initiatives of the World Economic Forum.

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