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HONORARY CO-CHAIRS: GEORGE F. RUSSELL, JR. AND JOHN C. WHITEHEAD

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Kofi Annan Receives 2007 Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award

On September 20th, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was presented with the 2007 Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award. The award was presented by BHF Honorary Co-Chairman George F. Russell, Jr., in honor of Mr. Annan's years of work to bring the private sector more into alignment with the objectives of humanitarian organizations, especially those within the UN system. The ceremony was attended by many notables, including former Swiss Confederation President Ruth Driefuss, Director General of the UN Offices in Geneva Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and several Ambassadors of UN Missions. BHF President John Maresca and Mr. Russell, in their remarks, emphasized the importance of the UN's role in working with private businesses to improve the effectiveness of their humanitarian projects. Mr. Annan's acceptance remarks highlighted the importance he attributes to the private sector's continuing involvement in humanitarian projects as well as his belief that the business world will continue to recognize the importance that its contributions can make to a better world. The award ceremony was held in Geneva at the Intercontinental Hotel and is the third time the award has been presented.



Honorary Co-Chair George Russell speaking at ceremony honoring Kofi Annan



George Russell presents award to Kofi Annan, with Jack Maresca

The BHF: Recipient of the 2006 European Generic Medicines Association Award

Training Workshop to be Organized in Amman, Jordan

The BHF, together with its project partners, the UN-affiliated University for Peace and the U.S. Institute of Peace plans to present a third edition of their training workshop on public-private partnerships in Amman, Jordan, in February 2008. Working with the UN University institute there, as well as the UNDP program for Iraq, the BHF will organize the workshop to benefit participants focused on the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. The workshop will be by invitation only and will be preceded by a roundtable discussion. This workshop follows two others, held in Geneva (September 2006) and New York (June 2007).

BHF-supported Pharmaceutical Plant in Kabul to Distribute Essential Medicines

Plans are underway for the Baz International Pharmaceutical Company (BIPC) to begin distribution and sale of a number of essential medicines in Kabul and selected provinces of Afghanistan during November. The medicines, donated by the European Generic medicines Association (EGA), will be shipped to Kabul by air in late October. Dr. Karim Baz, the BIPC owner, is already making arrangements to set up sales channels and to supply targeted distribution centers with the needed medicines. The distribution plan is a precursor to actual production in-country of the medicines, and is intended to “warm up” distribution channels and outlets for future distribution of “made in Afghanistan” medicines”.

Formal Opening Ceremony of the BHF-Assisted Mahwalala Clinic in Swaziland

BHF Director John King will attend the formal opening ceremony in December of the Mahwalala Clinic in Swaziland, rebuilt by the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) with BHF assistance. The clinic, which represents a major improvement in the ability of private clinics to treat HIV/AIDS and other diseases in the country, has undergone a three-year upgrade program that brought it into line with medical standards demanded by the Swazi Government and the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS. The clinic has been in actual operation for several months, but the ceremony will represent its formal hand-over to the Swazi authorities. The BHF and SRC are investigating other possible clinic upgrade projects in the country, which suffers from the world’s worst incidence of HIV/AIDS per capita.



The Mahwalala clinic in Swaziland

Conference Board Europe and BHF to hold Discussion Forum in Geneva

The Conference Board Europe and the BHF have agreed to hold a joint discussion forum in Geneva in early February 2008 on the subject of “Company Responsibilities in Countries with Human Rights Challenges.” By invitation only, the meeting will explore the very complex problems that companies face in operating in countries with governments that are accused of human rights abuses. A series of case studies will form the context for discussion, and the objective will be to draw conclusions and learning points that will help companies to deal with these politically sensitive subjects. Representatives of the private sector as well as NGOs and other interested groups will discuss the various elements of the problem.

Bosnia Wood Sector Projects Gain Momentum

Two projects underway in Bosnia and Herzegovina – a business-to-business meeting and the establishment of a university training center – will significantly improve the country’s ability to modernize and expand its wood products sector, the most promising part of its economy. The business-to-business meeting is currently scheduled for December and will allow local Bosnian wood processing companies to make contacts with other European companies and sales outlets. The training center, to be established at the University of Zenica, will offer much-needed practical courses for employees of local wood processing companies. The BHF is working with local partners to carry out these projects, which will represent another step in integrating Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European economy.

BHF Website Undergoing Redesign

Users will see a new look at the BHF website by the end of the year. Working with professional web designers, we hope to set up a simpler, cleaner and more user-friendly website to guide viewers through the BHF and its activities. We will also make the site more informative, enabling the user to quickly find material of interest as well as to contact us for further information.

BHF Staff Changes

Emily Talmon-l’Armee has left her position as BHF Head of Operations to take up a new post with the European Free Trade Association in Brussels. Claire Girardin-Falcy has joined the BHF as its on-site representative in Madagascar, where the BHF is looking to expand its activities.

Press Release - Kofi Annan Receives Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award

The Business Humanitarian Forum Association has presented its annual Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award to former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi A. Annan, for his exemplary work in encouraging responsible business policies and private sector support for humanitarian agencies of the United Nations. The award was conferred during a ceremony at the Hotel Intercontinental in Geneva on September 20 and attended by numerous heads of UN agencies, embassies as well as local government and private sector representatives.

The Business Humanitarian Forum Association (BHF), established in 1999, encourages private sector support for humanitarian efforts, and promotes sustainable economic development where it is needed most. The BHF does this by arranging for direct private sector involvement and investment in post-conflict and developing countries, and by providing training and facilitating dialogue between public organizations and private companies. The BHF has initiated and carried out several humanitarian and economic development projects in different parts of the world and has helped create partnerships between business, humanitarian agencies and local governments.

The Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award is named after the two Honorary Co-Chairmen of the BHF, Mr. George F. Russell Jr, and Mr. John C. Whitehead. The award was established in 2004 to recognize outstanding achievement in the field of humanitarian affairs involving the private sector.

The 2007 award has been presented to former United Nations Secretary General Kofi A. Annan in recognition of his continuing efforts to raise awareness globally of the need for private businesses to help resolve humanitarian problems. Through organizational creativity such as the establishment of the Global Compact as well as through countless personal efforts to bring the two sectors into more productive alignment, Mr. Annan has shown exceptional understanding of the real humanitarian potential that the private sector can bring to sustainable economic development in the world at large. His admirable work has helped increase mutual comprehension by both the public and private sectors, both of which must contribute to achieving mankind's goals of reducing poverty, creating jobs, and providing a better life for people everywhere.

The first award was presented to Mr. Rory O'Riordan, President of the European Generic Medicines Association, for his work in bringing the resources of the generic pharmaceutical sector to bear on providing essential medicines to post-conflict and developing areas. The second awardee, in 2006, was Mr. Farooq Kathwari, CEO of Ethan Allen Industries, for his humanitarian efforts relating to the problems of Kashmir.