



THE BHF NEWSLETTER

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

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Conference on Harnessing the Potential of the Private Sector for Development

On March 16, 2012, the BHF held a well-attended conference on “Harnessing the potential of the private sector for development” in Geneva. The goal of the conference was to showcase how the private sector can expand economic and social opportunity to local communities in developing countries and to learn about innovative cross-sector partnerships in this field. In order to encourage frank exchange, the workshop was held under the Chatham House Rule of Confidentiality.

The keynote address by Prof. Quadir from MIT on “Harnessing technology for development and democracy” perfectly illustrated how new technology can improve the productivity of people, thus empowering and allowing them to hold government more accountable. Prof. Quadir’s inspiring personal story of creating a mobile phone company which now provides connectivity to millions of people in Bangladesh was a case in point for entrepreneurship and new technology as key drivers of economic development and social progress.

The second presentation elaborated on the theme of connectivity from the perspective of a UN agency that mainly implements trade-related technical assistance projects. To this end, the organization enables SMEs to generate sustainable incomes and livelihoods for the poor by connecting them to global markets as well as supporting private-public sector dialogue, cooperation and implementation of joint export strategies.

A theme which ran through two sessions is the importance of an open, fair and rules-based multilateral trading system to continue supporting economic and social development. A leader from an international trade organization recalled the challenges to full market access faced by marginalized producers and communities and the head of an international organization representing global business interests spoke about the serious obstacles to on-going multilateral trade negotiations due to the financial crisis and



Private sector speakers during afternoon panel session

potential implications for the world economy and developing countries in particular. He offered suggestions on what business and governments can do to break the current deadlock in negotiations and counter protectionist tendencies.

Another presentation discussed the benefits and complexities of public-private collaboration on development projects. Given by a representative of a Western European government's national development agency, the presentation gave the audience a first-hand account of the organization's experiences and current projects, as well as important lessons learned and best practices for partnerships.

A panel of senior representatives from companies in the food, pharmaceutical and financial sectors rounded up the event by discussing the theme of "Approaches to shared economic development". Their presentations focused on innovative strategies and projects that their businesses had adopted to create value for local communities beyond classical corporate social responsibility policies.

The full [report](#) of this conference can be found on our website.

Iqbal Z. Quadir Receives 2012 Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award

Following the conference on March 16 in Geneva, the BHF presented its 2012 "Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award" to Professor Iqbal Z. Quadir, Founder and Director of the Legatum Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Founder of the telecommunications operator Grameenphone in Bangladesh.



Maria Cattai, Chair of the BHF's International Advisory Board, Prof. Iqbal Z. Quadir and John Maresca, President of the BHF Association Council

Prof. Quadir received the 2012 Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award for his visionary contribution to economic and social development in Bangladesh through the establishment of Grameenphone and other enterprises. The award also honors his personal engagement, teaching and leadership at the Legatum Center championing the role of entrepreneurship, technology and innovation as key drivers for lifting people out of poverty and empowering citizens in low-income countries.

The award was presented to Prof. Quadir by the Chair of the BHF's International Advisory Board and former Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce, Maria Cattai, together with John Maresca, President of the BHF Association Council.

The ceremony closed with a reception in honor of Prof. Quadir, where participants were invited to reflect upon and further discuss the day's insights in a more informal way.

The award is presented periodically to an outstanding individual or organization that has contributed in a significant way to facilitating private sector efforts to bring sustainable investment, job creation and economic development where they are needed most.

For more information on the ceremony and the award, please see the respective [report](#).

BHF 2010-11 Bi-Annual Report

The BHF is well into its second decade and is continuing its dedicated work to improve cross-sector cooperation and conditions for people living in post-conflict and conflict-prone areas around the world.

We are pleased to share our 2010-11 bi-annual report with the wider BHF community.

You can read more about our activities and find out about some new topics which we have covered during the 2010-11 period.

The [report](#) is available on our website.

We appreciate any comments from members of the BHF community.

Staff Updates

The BHF was pleased to welcome on board Mr. Tristan Irschlinger and Mr. Albert Kao as two new Project Assistants.

We would like to thank Project Officer Rita Kaali for the important work she carried out during her time with the organization. She left the BHF mid-year to join the ranks of The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

And finally, Mr. Manusriram Kamath from India joined us for a brief summer internship to contribute to an ongoing BHF research project.

