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GENERIC MEDICINES PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT ARRIVES IN KABUL; READY FOR INSTALLATION AND CALIBRATION



On July 5 two chartered cargo aircraft arrived at Kabul airport and delivered the production equipment for the factory being built near the city as the centerpiece of the BHF’s generic medicines project for Afghanistan. The machinery arrived in good condition, with a few minor exceptions, and was immediately transferred to trucks and transported to a storage area in the new factory itself. The construction of the factory is proceeding, and parts of the building have been completed. A BHF team was on hand for the arrival, which was filmed for a documentary production on the project. The next step will be installation and calibration of the equipment, due to start in September.

“The Objective of the Business Humanitarian Forum is to bring the resources, energy and creativity of the private sector to bear on the world’s humanitarian problems, for economic development, human security and well-being.”

BHF PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT NEPAD “BENDING THE ARC” CONFERENCE IN LONDON



NEPAD Conference Panel

BH F President Maresca was invited to speak at the “Bending the Arc” conference at the Guildhall in London on July 4. In his presentation, Maresca stressed the need for “Encouraged Investment” in areas such as Africa, where economic development is needed. Maresca suggested that international organizations need to offer local investors more of what he called the “Three F’s”: Facilitation, Flexibility and Financing. Maresca argued that financing is not

easily available for local entrepreneurs because they lack formal training in starting a business, but that donors should be prepared to support them, even with financial grants, to get economic development moving. He noted that grants are more easily available to NGOs to study development problems than they are to entrepreneurs who can contribute to the solution of such problems. The conference was sponsored by the NEPAD (New Economic Program for African Development) Business Group, the Africa Business Roundtable, and other organizations concerned with investment and economic development in Africa. The BHF has been a member of the NEPAD Business Group since its inception, and has focused on calling attention to the effects of humanitarian problems on the business and investment climate in Africa. The conference was held in connection with the G-8 summit in Scotland two days later, which also focused on the economic development of Africa. Maresca’s talking points at this conference is available on the BHF Website



Mr. Maresca addresses NEPAD conference.

http://www.bhforum.org/pdf/JM_Bending_The_Arc.pdf

BHF MODULE ON “WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR” IN USIP TRAINING PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON

The BHF has continued to contribute its teaching module on “Working with the Private Sector” to the regular training programs of the US Institute of Peace, an independent branch of the US Government, at its twice-yearly training programs near Washington. Most recently, John King, BHF Director, conducted this training session on July 12th. These training programs are designed for civil servants, military officers, international organization staff members, and NGO representatives who are headed to assignments in post-conflict areas, and cover all aspects of international community activities in such situations. The next such training course to be offered by USIP will be held on November 14-17 in Washington, D.C (http://www.usip.org/training/ngo_upcoming.html)

MISSIONS TO AFGHANISTAN

BHF sent a two-person mission to Afghanistan June 20 to July 11, composed of Emily Talmon-l'Armée, Head of Operations, and Brigitte Scherrer, Project Manager. Ms. Scherrer returned to Kabul from August 1 to August 13. These missions helped to advance discussions with several partners and organizations involved in the generic medicines project. The BHF team also held discussions with the WHO in Kabul, and was briefed on the new Afghan National Health Policy for 2005-2009, as well as on the National Health Strategy for 2005-2006. The BHF team was pleased to receive an Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) delegation, which visited the generic medicines factory site in Kabul in August (see photo above). OPIC is providing insurance for this project. The BHF team took advantage of its time in Afghanistan to evaluate some additional opportunities for private sector development projects.



BHF HEAD OF OPERATIONS PUBLISHES ARTICLE NOTING THE DIFFICULTY OF SERIOUS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROJECTS



10701.0014 Aid & Development

Corporate Social Responsibility: Easy to criticise – but not that easy to achieve

Emily Talmon-l'Armée, Head of Operations at the Business Humanitarian Forum (BHF) in Geneva, Switzerland

An Indian woman washing a bath-towel in an open well. Photo: © AP/Wide World

Recently, over what started as a rather pleasant lunch, and after a description of the kind of work I do, I found myself once again being backed into a corner and having my appetite for doing just that complicated. That large corporations are not really interested in helping developing countries at all or helping society, that we refuse just barely to make money and exploit markets wherever they get the chance... "It's all about profit and about taking more hamburgers to more services... more of the American way of life... Companies are not very interested in helping the people in the world at all, only taking advantage of them?" How many times have I heard this in my work by colleagues who work in humanitarian aid for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in developing countries? Even within the great halls of government and multilateral donor agencies who encourage development aid and participation of the private sector, there is a fear that the big transnational companies are simply out to make a profit.

While people acknowledge that many corporations do some good with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, there is more evidence of finger pointing and criticism than praise by organisations such as The Economist and Christian Aid. Christian Aid wrote an article in early 2004, highlighting the fact that corporations can do a lot of harm, yet they resist it by pretending they are doing charitable and good work. The Economist also wrote toward the negative aspects of CSR, while acknowledging some good in January 2005, they wrote:

"For most companies, CSR does not go very deep. There are many interesting exceptions... practices that work well enough in business terms to be genuinely embraced; or welcome because that happens to be doing real good. But for most public companies CSR is little more than a cosmetic treatment. The human face that CSR applies to capitalism goes on each morning, gets increasingly smeared by day and washes off at night."

A reminder of the definition of CSR

As the name indicates, a CSR activity is defined as one where a private corporation undertakes to help communities in a reasonable way and helps to relieve social, ecological or economic problems where the company is based or where the company has corporate activities. These activities can involve working to solve a local crisis or emergency, improving the quality of local health or education, or improving environmental or labour conditions in society. The purpose of this paper is not to unnecessarily endorse each company's CSR policy, but rather to show examples of the tremendous amount of work involved in the implementation of CSR practice. Policies are examples of how CSR activities are implemented in policies and in other challenging environments.

INTERNATIONAL AID & TRADE

BHF Head of Operations Emily Talmon-l'Armée has published an article which uses case studies to demonstrate how difficult it can be for companies to pursue and ensure the success of community support projects that they undertake as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility / Philanthropy programs.

The article, called "Corporate Social Responsibility: Easy to Criticise – but not that easy to achieve," is in the September edition of International Aid and Trade, and can also be viewed on the BHF website.

http://www.bhforum.org/pdf/Aid_and_Trade.pdf



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Croix-Rouge suisse
Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz 
Croce Rossa Svizzera

The BHF's Joint Project with the Swiss Red Cross for Upgrading Private Clinics in Africa for HIV/AIDS Treatment

The BHF and the Swiss Red Cross (SRC), are currently completing their pilot project of upgrading, equipping and staffing the private Mahwalala Clinic in Swaziland so that it can be integrated into the national Swazi network of medical facilities and be certified to receive internationally-funded medicines for comprehensive treatment of HIV/AIDS patients.

The two partners are now searching for other private clinics in Africa that may be suitable for such upgrading and certification, with the overall goal of reducing HIV/AIDS transmission and offering treatment to infected persons. The specific goal is to mitigate the impact of the disease by increasing the number of facilities that are available for treatment.

Swaziland currently has the world's highest HIV/AIDS infection rate. The government's health care capacity is insufficient and the few existing hospitals in the national medical network are concentrated in urban areas. More than 80% of hospitalisations are now due to HIV related illnesses. Although HIV/AIDS medicines are available in Swaziland and its neighboring countries, the lack of adequate facilities for administering them prevents their use. Therefore, increasing the number of health care facilities that are equipped to administer these therapies is a pressing requirement. The SRC/BHF program addresses this problem by upgrading and equipping existing private clinics.

Once the upgrading and equipping of a clinic is completed, it can be certified and integrated into the national health care system and thus become eligible to receive cost-free HIV/AIDS antiretroviral medicines through The Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The pilot project at the Mahwalala Clinic in Swaziland will be able to provide antiretroviral therapy for an estimated 500 people per year, and voluntary counseling and testing for about 1,500 people.

This project represents a concrete and successful model for fighting HIV/AIDS in Swaziland that the two partners intend to replicate in neighboring countries.

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BHF personnel are available for speaking engagements or presentations on subjects related to the work of the BHF.

For further information on the BHF, please visit our website, at www.bhforum.org.

For inquiries and comments please contact the BHF at bhinfo@bhforum.org or by mail.

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is a non-profit association registered under the laws of Switzerland. We welcome your support, which will help us to continue our work.

The BHF was established in 1999. Founders: Peter Bell, Susan Crowley Jean Freymond, John Imle, John Maresca, Sadako Ogata, Vladimir Petrovsky, George Russell, Jane Russell, Cornelio Sommaruga, John Whitehead and Robert Zoellick.