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AFRICA “SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS OF THE YEAR” AWARDED AT WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM’S REGIONAL SUMMIT FOR AFRICA 2011

- The Schwab Foundation announces four winners of the Social Entrepreneur of the Year in Africa at the World Economic Forum Regional Summit 2011 in Capetown, South Africa
- Winners working across Africa are among a group of 15 Social Entrepreneurs from around the world taking part in the Meeting – they provide an on-the-ground perspective to sustainability and social innovation
- Learn more about the Schwab Foundation at www.schwabfound.org

Capetown, South Africa, 5 May 2011 – Three Social Entrepreneurs will be recognized as regional social entrepreneurs of the year for the Africa Region, joining the 2010 South Africa national winner on the stage during the World Economic Forum’s Regional Summit Africa 2011, held in Capetown, South Africa on 5-7 May.

The Africa Social Entrepreneur of the Year Awards will be conferred by Hilde Schwab, Co-Founder of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. *“The next chapter for Africa requires us to look both at the tremendous opportunities for economic growth, and the challenges the continent in being able to tap into this growth. Social entrepreneurs, and the innovations they bring to make this economic growth inclusive of all is critical to improving the state of the world, and therefore the work we do at the World Economic Forum.”* said Schwab.

Mirjam Schoning, the Head of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship explained, *“Social entrepreneurs have an important lesson to share in today’s economic climate. They emphasize long-term sustainability instead of short-term gain. Their primary focus is to maximize benefits for society and the environment through innovative and effective business models. Their approach to entrepreneurship is one of sustainable economic growth across sectors and industries, from renewable energy and education to waste management, health and rural development.”*

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship is proud to award Aleke Dondo of Juhudi Kilimo, Juliana Rotich of Ushahidi and Olivia Van Rooyen of the Kuyasa Fund with the title of Social Entrepreneur of the Year.

Aleke Dondo - Juhudi Kilimo : Aleke Dondo, often called the grandfather of microfinance in East Africa, built Juhudi Kilimo from two of his strongest passions: microfinance and rural development. He holds a Master’s degree in economics and has carried out more than 30 major studies in the fields of small enterprise and microfinance development.

Juhudi Kilimo has provided asset financing to over 7,500 smallholder farmers, roughly half of which are women. The average income of Juhudi Kilimo clients doubles or triples as a result of their loan. In addition to offering loans for rural farmers to invest in productive assets such as cows, agricultural equipment and transport, Juhudi Kilimo offers compulsory asset insurance and life insurance to the borrower at a small cost. These two insurance products ensure that the borrower and her family can not be further indebted by the loan, mitigating the risks the rural poor face often face when becoming clients of many microlending institutions.

Olivia Van Rooyen, The Kuyasa Fund : Olivia van Rooyen, MBA, established Kuyasa in 1999, after working with rural workers in the hospitality and retail industry as a trade unionist and as a project manager for end-user financed community projects.

In South Africa, the demand for housing far outweighs supply, especially in urban areas where there is an ongoing inflow of population due to economic migration. An estimated 68% of South Africa's population falls into the low-income portion of the population that remains unbanked and therefore unable to access credit. The Kuyasa Fund bridges this gap, providing demand-led, short-term loans to finance incremental building and supplying a suitable mechanism through which the poor have been able to build financial and social capital through investment in housing.

The underlying belief of Kuyasa is that by improving the quality of housing, people improve the education, health and social status of the household. It enhances pride and the process of improving a home builds the self-esteem of the borrower, mostly women, and creates empowerment in other aspects of their lives.

Juliana Rotich – Ushahidi

Julian Rotich was in Western Kenya in 2008 when the election violence broke out. It was near impossible to get accurate and timely information. It was with this, that the impetus for Ushahidi was born. Ushahidi builds tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers for individuals to share their stories.

Since 2008, Ushahidi has grown to nearly 2 million users and has 17,000,000 unique visitors.

It has strengthened democracy and economic development, such as verifying election results across Brazil or tracking teacher absenteeism in Uganda. It has facilitated market efficiency, through mapping bio-gas markets prices and production across six countries in Africa. And it has helped aid workers in Haiti and Japan reach those affected by natural disasters.

Abigail Noble, Head of Africa for the Schwab Foundation explains the decision for these four awards.

On Juhudi Kilimo, Noble commented, "In Sub-Saharan Africa, 60 – 75% of people are employed in agriculture, mostly as subsistence small-scale farmers, and often they have little access to bank loans or technical training. Juhudi Kilimo's model of providing 6 months of financial literacy and animal husbandry training to borrowers before receiving their first loan, and then pairing the loan with both asset insurance and life insurance takes a multi-pronged approach to empowering small-scale farmers to create a virtuous cycle of income generation and asset accumulation."

On The Kuyasa Fund: Noble said, "Nearly 1.1 billion live in deficient homes around the world. The Kuyasa Fund has built successful partnerships both the government, federal and local, as well as with commercial investors, to help South Africans both build stable houses and create vibrant communities. Stable homes and vibrant communities are linked to child development, reduced crime, improved democracy, economic growth. This is key for the next generation and for the future of the economy."

On Ushahidi, Noble explained, "Ushahidi is one of the few social enterprises that has, in just a few short years of existence, dramatically changed the face of how individuals and communities can influence democracy and economic development around the world. With Ushahidi, an individual with a cellphone can be instrumental in enhancing the availability and accuracy of information that makes governments more transparent, responsive and accountable and makes markets more efficient. It is a social enterprise that was born out of the frustrations of what was not working in the world and it was started by a team of young, driven and passionate African professionals. It serves as superior example of how social entrepreneurship can and will change the world."

About the Schwab Foundation

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship was co-founded by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, and his wife, Hilde. Since its inception in 2000, the Foundation has been identifying the world's leading social entrepreneurs in over 40 countries around the globe. Social entrepreneurs implement innovative and pragmatic solutions to social problems by tackling the root causes and creating social transformation. Selected social entrepreneurs of the Schwab Foundation network participate in World Economic Forum events, thus providing unique opportunities for them to connect with business, political and media leaders. <http://www.schwabfound.org>

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