

NEWS RELEASE

19 February 2009

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INVITATION TO THE LAUNCH OF THE TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP

You are cordially invited to the launch of the Together Partnership on Tuesday 24 February 2009 at 2.30pm at Shaw Marketing and Design, Panmure Court, 32 Calton Road, Edinburgh EH8 8DP. The directors of the organisation will be present, along with Nicholas Hitimana, director of the pioneering Rwandan agribusiness, Ikirezi (www.ikirezi.com), and Gerda Siann, the Honorary Consul for Rwanda in Scotland.

NEW SCOTTISH ORGANISATION LAUNCHED TO CREATE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT BUSINESSES IN RWANDA

A new Scottish body – the Together Partnership – was launched in Edinburgh today (Tuesday 24 February) with the aim of creating partnerships between companies in Scotland and Rwanda. Established by a group of Scottish businesspeople with first-hand experience of Rwanda, the Partnership is working to transform the lives of people in Rwanda by building on the strong links between the two countries and enabling businesses here to provide financial backing, expertise and other support to Rwandan-based enterprises.

“The Together Partnership is a social enterprise which is looking to achieve social change in Rwanda,” said chairman Dennis Overton. “We’re using business principles and working with individuals, organisations and companies here with the objective of sponsoring and supporting companies in Rwanda.

“At the heart of the organisation is the fact that we can provide benefits for individuals and companies here in Scotland as well as in Rwanda. So we will be offering the opportunity for people here to visit Rwanda, to organise job exchanges, and to have work placements. Additionally, through partnerships we hope to see companies

benefiting from sharing expertise and tackling challenges well outwith their normal working environment. This can help with personal and professional development, motivation, staff retention, marketing opportunities, and corporate social responsibility issues.

“We have already begun a series of study visits to Rwanda, involving business people from here, to explore how they might engage with Rwandan companies and projects – the next visit will take place in March. We also see the organisation as being very much a catalyst for future Scottish-Rwandan initiatives.”

In this first phase of the Together Partnership’s development, it is focusing on the innovative Rwandan business, Ikirezi, which is now working with around 800 widows and orphans (as well as small farmers) from the 1994 genocide. Ikirezi is the creation of Nicholas Hitimana, who managed to escape the genocide and then studied agriculture at the University of Edinburgh. He returned to his native Rwanda in 2001, determined to bring about some reconciliation, and established Ikirezi, a group of co-operatives which grow plants to be distilled into essential oils.

“Scottish businesses and individuals can play a huge role – through financial backing and other support - in helping Rwandan companies like Ikirezi to develop and to tackle their professional challenges,” said Dennis Overton. “And where we see unique opportunities in this project is in the many profound benefits which can be gained through working with Rwandan partners. We really do believe that these partnerships can transform lives, not only in Rwanda but here in Scotland.”

Also attending the launch of the Together Partnership was Gerda Siann, the Honorary Consul for Rwanda. She commented: “The Together Partnership is an exciting and very worthwhile initiative which will undoubtedly contribute to the excellent progress that Rwanda is making in social and economic development. It typifies the generous and practical support that Scotland has been giving to Rwanda in recent years and I welcome it very much.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Together Partnership’s website is currently under construction but a temporary site is at www.togetherpartnership.org.

2. The next visit to Rwanda, which includes a party of seven businesspeople led by the Together Partnership's Gavin Cargill, takes place from 23-31 March. A number of those participating in this visit will attend the launch, including Edinburgh-based advocate, Lisa Henderson, who will speak at the event. A further visit is planned for September 2009.
3. Dr Nicholas Hitimana, who runs Ikirezi, will be available for interview at the launch and through contacting Dennis Overton on 07818 432359.
4. To date, the Together Partnership has been sponsored and supported by Aquascot, Caledonian Colour Printers, the Charles Bilinda Memorial Trust, Company Net, Shaw Marketing and Design, Value the Person International, and Wealthflow.
5. For further information, please contact Dennis Overton (07818 432359), Gavin Cargill (07968 848 387), Neil Francis (0771 252 7158), or Alastair Bruce (0131 557 5663).