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New Research by ExxonMobil Foundation and Cherie Blair Foundation for Women Reveals How Mobile Phones Can Help Women Entrepreneurs Develop Their Businesses

- Study demonstrates important role mobile phone technology can play in assisting women-owned businesses
- Research is part of a larger initiative, including pilot projects in Egypt, Indonesia and Nigeria, supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the ExxonMobil Foundation
- Over the last seven years, ExxonMobil has contributed \$53 million to spur economic opportunities for women globally

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The ExxonMobil Foundation and Cherie Blair Foundation for Women today released new research demonstrating how mobile phones can help women entrepreneurs develop and grow their businesses. The analysis across three emerging countries – Egypt, Nigeria and Indonesia – concludes there are a number of mobile technology-based solutions which, if tailored and scaled commercially, could support the business needs of women entrepreneurs.

Based on the research findings, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women will follow the study with a pilot program to provide women entrepreneurs with tailored mobile phone applications that will help them manage their businesses more effectively.

Research for the *Mobile Value Added Services: A Business Growth Opportunity for Women Entrepreneurs* report was conducted by the global management consultancy, Booz & Company. The report concluded that the extensive and ever-increasing penetration of mobile phones in developing and emerging markets presents a significant opportunity to women entrepreneurs who want to develop their micro businesses into flourishing small and growing enterprises. Mobile value added services are products offered through a mobile platform, such as text messaging and multimedia message services.

“We already know that when mobile technology is properly incorporated into daily use, it can address an ever-increasing range of needs,” said Cherie Blair, founder of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. “Yet many of these technologies are not designed with a woman entrepreneur in mind. This groundbreaking research and subsequent pilot program will identify the technology that is most effective for women entrepreneurs and will provide women with new opportunities to maximize the effectiveness and reach of their businesses.”

“In recent years, we have seen mobile phones evolve from a convenience to an essential

business tool, enabling entrepreneurs to address pressing business challenges, increase access to new markets and operate more efficiently,” said Suzanne M. McCarron, president of the ExxonMobil Foundation. “Yet all too often, women entrepreneurs around the world lack access to the technology and resources needed to succeed. Expanding the effective uses of mobile technology can help women earn more income and lead to more prosperity for them, their families, their communities and their countries.”

High level findings of the research include:

- **Micro-enterprises** (companies with less than 10 employees) represent 98 percent of entrepreneurial activity in the three countries. There are roughly 32 million women across the three countries.
- Women’s businesses in these countries are concentrated in **four key sectors**: wholesale and retail; light manufacturing; hospitality and social services. These are the sectors in which mobile enabled applications could help women grow their businesses.
- **Key business challenges** include access to information and communication technology; affordable resources; networks and access to marketplaces, have been highlighted as relevant across three countries and sectors.
- Over 88 percent of women entrepreneurs were **willing to use mobile value added services** to address the core challenges they face in their businesses.
- More than 82 percent of women entrepreneurs indicated a **willingness to pay for these services**.
- The **average monthly expenditure** for mobile services among women entrepreneurs surveyed in our research was almost four times greater than the market average.
- The high number of women entrepreneurs and the fact that they use mobile phone services extensively highlights an **opportunity** for the private sector to provide an innovative service which focuses on this segment and helps women entrepreneurs develop their businesses at the same time.
- Successful implementation and growth of mobile value added services requires **collaboration between different stakeholders** in order to ensure appropriate content creation and distribution.

About ExxonMobil Foundation

ExxonMobil Foundation is the primary philanthropic arm of [Exxon Mobil Corporation](#) (NYSE:XOM) in the United States. Globally, ExxonMobil and the ExxonMobil Foundation provide funding to [improve basic education](#), [promote women as catalysts](#) for development, and [combat malaria](#) and other infectious diseases in developing countries. In 2010, together with its employees and retirees, ExxonMobil, its divisions and affiliates, and ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$237 million in contributions worldwide, of which \$110 million was dedicated to education. Additional information on ExxonMobil’s community partnerships and contribution programs is available at www.exxonmobil.com/community.

About Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women provides women with the skills, technology,

networks and access to finance that they need to become successful small and growing business owners, so that they can contribute to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies. www.cherieblairfoundation.org

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