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# **ExxonMobil and Africare Launch Three-Year Women's Economic Empowerment Program in Chad**

## **Supporting Women in Business Most Effective Way To Grow Economy**

N'DJAMENA, Chad--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- ExxonMobil and Africare announced today that they have commenced work on a \$1.75 million three-year project designed to empower rural women in southern Chad by developing their entrepreneurial capacity in small business development and income generation projects, obtaining micro-credit, and accessing markets. The project will be the largest single contribution to-date under the ExxonMobil Foundation's Educating Women and Girls Initiative for a women's economic development project.

"We launched the Educating Women and Girls Initiative because an extensive body of research demonstrated that expanding education and resources for women and girls is one of the most effective ways to promote health and economic development," said Rex W. Tillerson, chairman and chief executive officer, Exxon Mobil Corporation (NYSE:XOM). "As one of the largest direct foreign investors in Africa, ExxonMobil understands it makes sense to foster economic growth and improve health on the continent. It is good for our employees, our neighbors and our customers."

The goal of the project in Chad is to strengthen the capacity of women's associations to initiate priority income-generating enterprises, increase access to micro-credit and train rural women in entrepreneurship, financial management and marketing skills. This project exemplifies the Educating Women and Girls Initiative's focus on providing women with the training, access to financial resources and support structures to improve their economic livelihoods and strengthen economic development in the communities where ExxonMobil does business.

Mr. Julius E. Coles, president of Africare, expressed his sincere appreciation to ExxonMobil for the company's generous contribution to this important project, which will change the lives of so many women and communities in Doba and Bebedija Districts in southern Chad. "As a grassroots, community-led organization, Africare will work in partnership with women and communities to promote profitable enterprises and products that ensure continued income security for the participating women entrepreneurs. It is anticipated that the income generated from these economic units will be used to support the women's families and to be further invested in business," he said.

Stephane de Mahieu, general manager for ExxonMobil affiliate Esso Exploration and Production Chad, Inc., said, "We are pleased to support this ambitious project, which will have a positive impact on the lives of the women in and around the oil field development

area. ExxonMobil has a long history of working with Africare and I look forward to doing so in Chad for the benefit of the local communities."

One hundred women's associations will be assisted, benefiting approximately 2,500 women, many of whom head households. These women have either never attended or dropped out of school, lack employment opportunities, or have few economic assets. Examples of business enterprises the rural women will establish are bread baking, tailoring, cheese production, grain milling and arts and crafts.

Chad ranks 171 out of 177 in the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index and more than three quarters of the population lives on less than one dollar per day. Studies confirm that programs directed at educating women and girls yield a higher rate of return than any other community investment available in the developing world. Educated women are healthier and less likely to die in childbirth than women with little or no schooling. The children of educated mothers are more likely to have better nutrition and immunization rates and to live longer and healthier lives. Educating women and girls has also been shown to help improve sanitation, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and improve household incomes and economic growth.

#### About Africare

Africare is a leading non-profit organization specializing in African development and aid. It is also the oldest and largest African-American led organization in that field. Since its founding in 1970, Africare has delivered more than \$710 million in assistance and support -- over 2,500 projects and millions of beneficiaries -- to 36 countries Africa-wide. Africare has its international headquarters in Washington, DC, with field offices currently in some 25 African countries. Additional information on Africare's programs is available at [www.africare.org](http://www.africare.org).

#### About ExxonMobil Foundation

ExxonMobil Foundation is the primary philanthropic arm of the Exxon Mobil Corporation. The Foundation and the Corporation engage in a range of philanthropic activities that advance education, health and science in the communities where ExxonMobil has significant operations. In 2007, together with its employees and retirees, Exxon Mobil Corporation, its divisions and affiliates, and ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$207 million in contributions worldwide, of which \$70 million was dedicated to education. Additional information on ExxonMobil's community partnerships and contributions programs is available at [www.exxonmobil.com/community](http://www.exxonmobil.com/community).

Source: Exxon Mobil Corporation and Africare