

icipe Launch Remarks

For Peggy Woo

March 3, 2016

Acknowledgements

His Excellency, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn

His Excellency, Dr. Gebregziabher Gebreyohanes,

Director General, *icipe*, Dr. Segenet Kelemu

Youth Delegates

Foundation partners

Honored Guests

Introduction

Thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you this morning.

My name is Peggy Woo, I am Chief Financial Officer at The MasterCard Foundation.

The Foundation

For those of you who are unfamiliar with us, let me tell you about who we are.

The MasterCard Foundation is based in Toronto, Canada. Early on in our history, we made a commitment to Africa. And today we work in 28 countries across the continent.

Our foundation is motivated by a simple vision: to provide those who want it the opportunity to learn and prosper.

Through our Scholars program, we are educating the next generation of African leaders. In our youth livelihoods program, we are preparing young people for the workforce. And in our financial inclusion work, we are giving people the financial tools they need to save and invest.

Over the last six years we have committed more than \$1.6 billion US dollars to support projects like this one in the region. Here in Ethiopia we have committed more than \$31 million US dollars to projects in education, skills training and financial inclusion.

Some of those projects, such as our work with CARE provides financial access to vulnerable and food insecure households in rural areas. Others, such as our work with Save the Children benefit young people who have missed the opportunity to go to school, and are working in informal labour in rural communities.

Agriculture

Working with rural communities and in agriculture is a focus of our work. Because, as you know, agriculture is a sector of significant opportunity for young people.

Across the continent, millions of people derive their livelihoods from agriculture. It remains the single largest source of income, employment, and trade. And it is a sector that is particularly relevant to young people.

Problem of Perception

Despite agriculture's potential, it suffers from persistent negative perceptions in many communities.

But the sector has changed. It is time for perceptions to change with it.

Examples of young people in agriculture

There are already young people who are innovating the sector.

Like Chantal Butare from Rwanda. Chantal started a dairy cooperative that provides market access for women who were given a cow through the government's program for genocide survivors.

And Arnest Sebbumba, a MasterCard Foundation Youth Think Tank member and a participant in one of our skills training programs.

He developed his family farm into a business. And founded Countryside Youth Foundation to mentor other young people on agricultural practices.

These are just two examples of young people who have the drive, the ingenuity to innovate agriculture and change its perception among young people.

The *icipe* Project

The project we launch today continues that work. Together with *icipe* and the Ethiopian government, we will create employment opportunities for thousands of young people in beekeeping and silk farming in Ethiopia. Importantly, forty percent of those opportunities will go to young women.

These are young people in Ethiopia who are out of school, unemployed and living in poverty.

They will acquire skills, tools and resources to develop small enterprises in beekeeping or silkworm farming.

For example, this project will provide business management and life-skills such as leadership and interpersonal communications. It will also provide young people with access to financial education and services, links to markets and give them access the equipment they need.

Honey and Silk

As you know, in Ethiopia, beekeeping is an ancient agricultural tradition. This country produces some of the best honey in the world. And is the largest honey producer in Africa.

Despite the exceptional quality and growing popularity of Ethiopian honey, beekeeping as a formal industry and driver of employment remains relatively small.

We believe that with the right investment and innovation, there is a significant opportunity to create a range of jobs related to honey production. And silk too. From harvesting to processing, packaging, and marketing.

That's why this project comes at the right time.

icipe

We are proud to partner with *icipe* on this remarkable initiative.

icipe's dedication to developing next generation leaders in research, science, technology and agriculture is one that we share.

On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to thank you for your partnership. We welcome your expertise and vision to the MasterCard Foundation family.

Ethiopian Government

I would like to also thank the Ethiopian Government. It is your focus on agricultural productivity and markets that has laid the foundation for this project. Thank you for your leadership.

The opportunity in the sector is significant. And we look forward to supporting other projects in Ethiopia in the future which align with the government's development strategy

Conclusion

I hope that as we launch this remarkable program, we continue to build on the strength of our partnership.

Thank you.