

For Immediate Release

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Opportunity International Joins Industry Leaders in Alleviating Global Poverty

SEEP Conference Unites Experts to Transform Development through Microenterprise

OAK BROOK, Ill., Nov. 1, 2011 – This week, [Opportunity International](#) joins USAID, Credit Suisse, IFC World Bank Group, Blue Orchard, Grameen Foundation and other industry leaders in sponsoring the [2011 SEEP “Powering Connections” conference](#). Every year, [SEEP](#) brings together microfinance practitioners from a variety of disciplines to build capacity through the sharing of industry best practices. This conference is one of the cornerstones of development—for four days thought-leaders will discuss innovative ways to use microfinance and microenterprise solutions to alleviate poverty in the developing world.

“Microfinance is a powerful tool that is changing the face of international development. We are proud to be part of the SEEP network of organizations dedicated to empowering individuals and communities through microenterprise,” said Dennis Ripley, Senior Vice President of International Development for Opportunity International. “One of the themes of the this year’s SEEP Conference is savings, and through our participation we are joining in the conversation with other thought leaders from around the globe to discuss the evolving microfinance landscape, and how the various models and partnerships that are being developed by organizations to provide access to savings accounts are giving the world’s poorest citizens a safety net for the future.”

SEEP “Powering Connections” will offer a number of workshops and plenary sessions on savings. In the plenary session “State of the Sector: Microfinance in an Evolving Landscape,” David Simms, Board Chair of Opportunity International’s Global Microfinance Operations, will join in a discussion about the progress the microfinance institutions have made over the last 30 years, and what the future will hold for the rapidly evolving financial ecosystem. The session will address the ways in which microfinance organizations can remain relevant and responsive to new demands, one area in which Opportunity International has excelled through the expansion of its portfolio of financial tools that reach well beyond small business loans and extend to access to savings accounts, insurance and training.

During the SEEP Conference, Opportunity International will also sponsor a workshop, “Unleashing the Power of Small Holder Farmers in Africa.” The session, led by John Magnay, Opportunity International's Senior Agricultural Advisor, and Gilbert Lagaille, CEO of Opportunity International Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), will look at how the organization’s Agriculture Finance model provides African rural smallholder farmers with a full range of financial services that enable them to build a safety net for their families.

Also participating in the SEEP Conference will be Ted Moser, an Opportunity International board member, who will present during a plenary session on using the latest technology advances to bring access to savings accounts to the world’s most remote regions. Richard Leftley, CEO of MicroEnsure, a subsidiary of Opportunity International, will participate in a workshop that will analyze the defining characteristics of microinsurance and look at a variety of microinsurance partnership models. During the conference, Opportunity will also participate in a panel hosted by

Credit Suisse that will explore efforts to improve collaboration and transparency among industry leaders in communicating the social impact and measurement of microfinance programs.

What: Opportunity International is a gold sponsor of the 2011 SEEP “Powering Connections” conference focused on savings enterprise and market development.

When: Monday, Oct. 31 - Thursday, Nov. 3, 2011

Where: Sheraton National Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, Virginia

Who: David Simms, Board Chair of Opportunity International’s Global Microfinance Operations; Ted Moser, Opportunity International board member; Dennis Ripley, Senior Vice President of International Development for Opportunity International; Gilbert Lagaille, CEO, Opportunity DRC; John Magnay, senior agricultural advisor for Opportunity International; Richard Leftley, CEO of MicroEnsure, a subsidiary of Opportunity International, and other Opportunity International staff members will participate in plenary sessions and workshops during the conference.

About Opportunity International

Opportunity International provides access to savings accounts, small business loans, insurance and training to over 2.5 million people working their way out of poverty in the developing world. Clients in more than 20 countries use these financial tools to start or expand a business, provide for their families, create jobs for their neighbors and build a safety net for the future. For more information, visit www.opportunity.org or join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter.

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