

Acumen and Dow Launch the Technical Assistance Initiative to Support Social Enterprises Across East and West Africa

NAIROBI, Kenya, May 30 /CSRwire/ - Acumen, with support from Dow, Coca-Cola and Standard Chartered hosted the Technical Assistance (TA) Initiative Summit from 14th – 16th May 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Summit signaled the start of the TA Initiative that aims to accelerate the development and distribution of crucial products and services in agriculture, water, sanitation and energy across East and West Africa.

“Dow is proud to collaborate with Acumen to foster sustainable change and business growth in the region,” said Ross McLean, president, Dow Sub-Saharan Africa. “The collaboration represents an important opportunity to create shared learning and open dialogue on how best to support local economies and address societal needs in Africa at a time of significant business growth.”

The Summit brought together 10 social enterprises in Acumen’s portfolio from across East and West Africa. They were joined by Dow, Coca-Cola, Standard Chartered and several other leading corporations. Duncan Onyango, Acumen East Africa Regional Director said “this Initiative will help craft a realistic model to resolve daily operational challenges faced by social enterprises.”

Acumen’s mission is to change the way the world tackles poverty by using investment tools to build businesses that serve low-income communities across South Asia and Africa. Acumen has invested over \$30M across East Africa, impacted 81M lives through its investments and helped social enterprises attract an additional \$66M. Acumen established a local presence in East Africa in 2007 and has created and supported 44,000 jobs through its investments.

Sapna Shah, Acumen’s Portfolio Manager in East Africa, has invited the social enterprises attending the Summit to apply for Technical Assistance funds available to support their operations as they seek to scale. In addition, plans are underway with several of the participating corporations to engage directly with the social enterprises in support of their growth.

For more information please contact Kenneth Macharia, East Africa Business Development and Communications Manager at Acumen on email, kmacharia@acumen.org, or mobile, +254 (0) 718 928 955.

About Acumen

Acumen is a not-for-profit working to change the way the world tackles poverty by investing in companies, leaders and ideas. We invest patient capital in business models that deliver critical goods and services to the world’s poor, improving the lives of millions. Since 2001, Acumen has invested more than \$83 million in 73 companies across South Asia and Africa. We are also working to build a global community of emerging leaders that believe in creating a more inclusive world through the tools of both business and philanthropy. Please visit www.acumen.org for more information.

About Dow

Dow (DOW) combines the power of science and technology to passionately innovate what is essential to human progress. The Company connects chemistry and innovation with the principles of sustainability to help address many of the world's most challenging problems such as the need for clean water, renewable energy generation and conservation, and increasing agricultural productivity. Dow's diversified industry-leading portfolio of specialty chemical, advanced materials, agrosiences and plastics businesses delivers a broad range of technology-based products and solutions to customers in approximately 160 countries and in high growth sectors such as electronics, water, energy, coatings and agriculture. In 2012, Dow had annual sales of \$57 billion and employed approximately 54,000 people worldwide. The Company's more than 5,000 products are manufactured at 188 sites in 36 countries across the globe. References to "Dow" or the "Company" mean The Dow Chemical Company and its consolidated subsidiaries unless otherwise expressly noted. More information about Dow can be found at www.dow.com.

Quotes for reference:

1. Duncan Onyango – East Africa Regional Director, Acumen

“The Acumen Dow Technical Assistance Initiative will help craft a realistic model to resolve daily operational challenges faced by social enterprises.”

2. Ross McLean – President, Dow Sub-Saharan Africa

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3. Norah Odwesso, Public Affairs and Communications Director, Coca-Cola Central East and West Africa

“At Coca-Cola, we encourage partnerships among civil society, the government and business because we believe this "Golden Triangle" is the model for transforming communities sustainably. We are proud to have supported the effort by Acumen and Dow to help scale innovative business ventures that serve local communities.”

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Dow Chemical Company

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