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Safe Water Network Announces New Partnerships to Create a Sustainable, Affordable, and Scalable Rainwater Harvesting Program in Rajasthan, India

Safe Water Network, Boruka Charitable Trust, the Center for microFinance, & the Institute of Health Management Research Collaborate on a Rainwater Harvesting Initiative.

JAIPUR, INDIA (March 31, 2009) Safe Water Network – a not-for-profit dedicated to the development of reliable, sustainable, and scalable water solutions for the world’s poor – announced today a partnership with India-based organizations Boruka Charitable Trust, the Centre for microFinance, and the Institute of Health Management Research for a rainwater harvesting optimization program in the state of Rajasthan, India. This 18-month initiative expands on a recently completed program that delivered rainwater harvesting systems to 15 villages in the Churu District of Rajasthan.

The program supports the development and validation of improvements in three areas: cistern design, water quality, and funding tools. The program also includes the completion of a white paper, which will make policy recommendations specific to Rajasthan. Learnings from the initiative will be shared with others who are working around the world to help the nearly one billion people living in areas of acute water scarcity.

“This work builds on findings from our initial project” says Kurt Soderlund, Chief Executive Officer, Safe Water Network. “We are pleased to partner with these Rajasthan-based organizations to take a comprehensive approach that will bring measurable improvements to the age-old practice of rainwater harvesting.”

Boruka Charitable Trust will construct more than 600 household level rainwater cisterns (kund) and refurbish 32 community-level cisterns, bringing safe water to approximately 10,000 individuals throughout 40 villages. “Through the improvement and standardization of the cistern, we are creating a more durable, affordable, and easy-to-replicate rainwater harvesting program,” says Amitava Banerjee, Executive Director, Boruka Charitable Trust. “And, through the education of local masons, we will ensure the systems are well maintained and therefore operational and functional over time.”

The Institute of Health Management Research is supporting the “software” elements of the program – including water quality management, health and hygiene promotion, working with government liaisons, and preparing the white paper for policy makers. This includes social marketing strategies and advocacy programs to communicate opportunities in rainwater harvesting to stakeholders in the State of Rajasthan. “This is a unique opportunity to demonstrate opportunities for local communities and government officials to pursue the considerable advantages of rainwater harvesting, which realizes significant economic and environmental benefits,” says Goutam Sadhu, Program Director, Institute of Health Management Research. “If delivered correctly, and combined with the proper community participation, rainwater harvesting can be a powerful tool in significantly reducing the incidence of water-borne illness and disease as well as the widespread suffering caused by water scarcity.”

The participation of the Centre for microFinance will demonstrate alternative funding models that enable villagers to obtain loans to pay for their water harvesting facilities over time. “What we’ve

learned from past work with rainwater harvesting is that traditional donor programs and subsidy models alone are too expensive to be replicated at a large scale,” says Jai Pal Singh, Executive Director, Centre for microFinance. “We will identify approaches that balance the need for subsidies with access to microcredit facilities to best ensure affordability for all those in need, including the extreme poor.”

Safe Water Network’s rainwater harvesting initiative in Rajasthan is funded, in part, by PepsiCo Foundation. “This project supports PepsiCo Foundation’s commitment to investing in organizations that create and implement sustainable programs to improve the environment and health around the world,” says Claire Lyons, Manager of Global Grant Programs, PepsiCo Foundation. “In collaboration with Safe Water Network and our extended network of partners in India, we are working towards bringing safe water and healthy practices to those in the greatest need. “

About Safe Water Network

Headquartered in Westport, CT, Safe Water Network is a 501(c)3 cofounded in 2007 by actor and philanthropist Paul Newman and several leading civic and business leaders to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable water to the nearly one billion people who currently live without access to potable water. With its funding and expertise, Safe Water Network supports multi-sector and multi-disciplinary partnerships that create comprehensive, sustainable, and ultimately scalable solutions for our world’s water crisis. Safe Water Network’s projects are funded, in part, by PepsiCo Foundation and Newman’s Own Foundation. For more information, please visit www.safewaternetwork.org or email info@safewaternetwork.org.

About Bhoruka Charitable Trust

Headquartered in Jaipur, BCT is a Social Service Institution incorporated in 1962 under the Public Charitable Trust Act by Shri P D Agarwal to “uplift the underprivileged” through the physical, social, cultural, and economic development of rural people and institutions. For more information, visit www.bctngo.org.

About the Institute of Health Management Research

Established in 1984 in Jaipur by Dr. Ashok Agarwal, IIMR is recognized as a “Research Institution” and is working in collaboration with WHO Centre for District Health System for Primary Health Care, with attention solely focused on health systems management. The Institute undertakes training, research, and consultancy in health management in close collaboration with international organizations such as UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, ODA, DANIDA, KFW & GTZ, NORAD, CARE, USAID, Johns Hopkins University, and New Jersey Institute of Technology. For more information, visit www.iihmr.org.

About the Centre for microFinance (CmF)

The CmF was established in Jaipur (Rajasthan) in 2005 to widen, deepen, and upscale the microfinance movement in Rajasthan. The Centre is an autonomous institution set up to provide a wide range of technical and other support services to microfinance players, focusing specifically on networking and collaboration. For more information, visit www.cmfrac.org.

About PepsiCo Foundation

Established in 1962, PepsiCo Foundation is the philanthropic anchor of PepsiCo and responsible for providing charitable contributions to eligible non-profit organizations. The Foundation is committed to developing sustainable partnerships and programs in underserved regions that provide opportunities for

improved health, environment and inclusion. In 2008 alone, PepsiCo Foundation contributed \$30 million towards programs to help achieve the vision of creating a better tomorrow for the global community. For more information visit: <http://www.pepsico.com/Purpose/PepsiCo-Foundation.aspx>