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## **United Nations Foundation and the ExxonMobil Foundation Release New Report on Most Effective Programs for Women's Economic Empowerment**

*The Report, A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment, Identifies Key Interventions for Increasing Women's Productivity and Earnings Worldwide*

**IRVING, TEXAS and WASHINGTON, D.C. – SEPTEMBER 16, 2013** – The United Nations Foundation and the ExxonMobil Foundation announced today a new evidence-based report that identifies proven, promising and high-potential interventions to promote women's economic advancement around the world. The report, *A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment*, provides funders, NGOs and governments a framework for selecting and implementing programs that successfully increase women's productivity and earnings in particular economic and country contexts.

Research has demonstrated that when women are economically empowered, communities and nations benefit. Yet, until now, there remained a crucial knowledge gap regarding the most effective interventions that directly advance women's economic opportunities. To address this gap, the UN Foundation and the ExxonMobil Foundation joined forces in 2012 to produce *A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment*.

"We know that expanding economic opportunities for women is the right and smart thing to do. The big question is how," said Mayra Buvinic, UN Foundation Senior Fellow and lead author of the report. "This report and roadmap draw on the best available evidence to guide funding and action toward economic empowerment programs that have demonstrated results and can be scaled for impact."

The report, the first of its kind to gather this breadth of existing research, summarizes the findings of 18 research studies with a focus on programs across four categories: entrepreneurship, farming, wage employment and young women's employment. On the basis of these studies, the project compiled a database of 136 published empirical evaluations of programs and policies. The research studies and the report systematically analyzed the effectiveness of interventions in terms of increasing women's productivity and earnings, taking into account the economic and social contexts. They also looked at the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of programs to provide a new, reliable framework for how best to empower women.

"There is widespread agreement that expanding economic opportunities for women is integral to broader global development and economic progress," said Suzanne McCarron, President, ExxonMobil Foundation. "We are hopeful this report will be an important resource for the community of funders, practitioners and policymakers as they look to shape or strengthen the impact of their programs."

Key lessons from the report include:

- **Proven and Promising Interventions:** Based on strength of empirical evidence, the Roadmap identifies nine proven and nine promising interventions. They include savings accounts, proven to increase women's productivity and earnings, and the use of mobile phones, which promise to deliver financial services and market information in a cost-effective way to women farmers and entrepreneurs.
- **The Very Poor Need More:** Very poor women need a more intensive package of services than less poor women to break out of subsistence production, in agriculture and entrepreneurship.
- **In-Kind Assistance:** Providing capital in-kind (as inventory, for instance) rather than in cash can help nudge women microentrepreneurs to keep the capital in the business and avoid pressure to divert it to other family members or household needs.
- **Wage Employment:** Access to childcare increases women's wage employment levels and earnings, but design and delivery matter to ensure quality, affordable and cost-effective care.
- **Young Women:** Cash grants to poor and very poor young women may increase their employment options and resulting income, and have sizeable social benefits.
- **Country Context:** Whether an intervention works depends on the economic situation of the woman and the context in which she lives. In high fertility, agrarian economies, for example, programs for women farmers need to be complemented by interventions seeking to reduce women's work and time burdens, including access to quality family planning and reproductive health services. In resource rich economies and small island nations, programs should seek to identify and develop domestic and niche export markets that are accessible to women producers.

This report is a joint initiative, building on the shared interests and expertise of the UN Foundation and the ExxonMobil Foundation, both of which have long prioritized the economic empowerment of women as a means of promoting economic and social development.

For more than a decade, the UN Foundation has helped the United Nations address the rights and needs of women and girls. The UN Foundation works with the UN, civil society, governments and the private sector to promote gender equality, advance reproductive and maternal health, empower adolescent girls, and eliminate gender-based violence.

The grant awarded to the UN Foundation for this research is part of more than \$60 million invested by ExxonMobil and the ExxonMobil Foundation in the past eight years to support the economic advancement of women.

The report and a searchable database of empirical program and policy evaluations are available at [www.womeneconroadmap.org](http://www.womeneconroadmap.org).

#### **About the ExxonMobil Foundation**

The ExxonMobil Foundation is the primary philanthropic arm of Exxon Mobil Corporation (NYSE:XOM) in the United States. Globally, ExxonMobil and the ExxonMobil Foundation provide funding to improve basic education, promote women as catalysts for development, and combat malaria and other infectious diseases in developing countries. In 2012, together with its employees and retirees, Exxon Mobil Corporation (NYSE:XOM), its divisions and affiliates, and the ExxonMobil Foundation provided \$256 million in contributions worldwide. Additional information on ExxonMobil's community

partnerships and contribution programs is available at [www.exxonmobil.com/community](http://www.exxonmobil.com/community).

**About the United Nations Foundation**

The United Nations Foundation builds public/private partnerships to address the world's most pressing problems, and broadens support for the United Nations through advocacy and public outreach. Through innovative campaigns and initiatives, the Foundation connects people, ideas, and resources to help the UN solve global problems. The Foundation was created in 1998 as a U.S. public charity by entrepreneur and philanthropist Ted Turner and now is supported by global corporations, foundations, governments, and individuals. For more information, visit [www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org).

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