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## **Graça Machel Trust Launches Women Advancing Africa Forum**

*Inaugural Forum convenes a powerful movement of African women to build a common agenda for the economic advancement of women*

**Dar es Salaam, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017** – The Graça Machel Trust officially launched today the Women Advancing Africa Forum, a new Pan-African initiative to acknowledge and celebrate the critical role women play in shaping Africa’s future. More than 200 African women leaders and partners are expected to attend the Forum.

“Women Advancing Africa seeks to create an intergenerational movement of women who will build consensus on priorities they are going to tackle together,” said Mrs. Machel. “By connecting women leaders, we can open avenues and opportunities that will bring along thousands and indeed millions of women, to conquer and take advantage of the economic advances being made in Africa.”

Speakers for the inaugural Forum include H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, Vice President of the Republic of Tanzania and member of UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Hon. Ummu Mwalimu, Minister of Health, Gender, Community Development, Children and the Elderly for Tanzania, as well as experts and activists from key economic sectors including mining and extractives, agri-business, banking, telecommunications, media, healthcare, services and trade.

“Tanzania underscores the importance of women in social and economic development and the obstacles they experience in their quest to achieve their goals,” said Hon. Ummu Mwalimu. “Our government is keen on empowering women so that they can collectively join forces in engaging on issues impacting their welfare with a view to creating an equal society and inclusive economy for all our citizens.”

Women Advancing Africa will showcase African women’s leadership and create an inclusive pan-African agenda to accelerate women’s advancement in three core areas: Financial Inclusion to bring more women into the formal financial system, Market Access to elevate women’s economic participation and Social Change to change the way society values women and their contributions.

In line with these core focus areas, the Trust will launch several studies and publications at the WAA Forum – revealing important new insights on the opportunities and challenges facing African women, including: The Female Economy in Africa; Women in Media: What is the Narrative? A Survey to Explore Growth Barriers Faced by Female Entrepreneurs in East Africa; The Empowerment of Women Study and Case studies of innovative ways to empower African women. The Forum will also see the launch of a book entitled, Women Creating Wealth, which is a compilation of success stories of African women in business.

During the four-day gathering, the Trust will collaborate with notable women leaders from government, civil society and the private sector to develop targeted priorities across six industry tracks, including Agri-business, Energy, Extractives and Infrastructure, Services and Trade, Technology, Financial Inclusion and Changing the Narrative: Media and Creative Industries. Main outcomes of the Forum are expected to focus on:

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- **Creating a Common Advocacy Agenda.** To drive social and economic change that is measurable and impactful;
- **Developing Financial Tools that Work for Women.** Creating financial tools and systems (including alternate models) that respond to the needs of diverse women and enable access to financial products and services;
- **Increasing Women's Access to Capital.** Placing more resources in the hands of women;
- **Elevating Women's Leadership.** Advancing women in management and leadership positions across key economic sectors;
- **Commitments from Key Institutions.** Challenging public, private and non-governmental institutions do their part to include and advance women through bold pledges;
- **Dynamic New Networks.** Developing dynamic networks that generate opportunities for women and ensure young leaders are supported and mentored;
- **Amplifying Women's Voices.** Increasing the visibility and voices of women through more nuanced storytelling.

The Women Advancing Africa Forum is a first-of-its-kind initiative focused on empowering women to better participate and benefit from Africa's growing economy. The Forum will also feature a variety of side events focused on critical issues, including food security and nutrition; education initiatives and ending child marriage; leadership and wellness; as well as changing the narrative of women in media.

To learn more about the Women Advancing Africa Forum and view the full programme and list of side events, please visit [www.womenadvancingafrica.com](http://www.womenadvancingafrica.com). For updates, announcements and livestream sessions from the inaugural Forum, follow Women Advancing Africa on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **About the Graça Machel Trust**

The Graça Machel Trust is an organisation that works across the continent to drive positive change across women's and children's rights, as well as governance and leadership. Through our support of local initiatives and connecting key stakeholders at a regional, national and sub-national level, we help to catalyse action where it is needed. By using our convening power the Trust seeks to: amplify the voices of women and children in Africa; influence governance; promote women's contributions and leadership in the economic social and political development of Africa. For more, please visit [www.gracamacheltrust.org/new](http://www.gracamacheltrust.org/new)

### **The Graça Machel Trust: Women's Networks**

#### ***The Network of African Business Women (NABW)***

The Network of African Business Women (NABW) provides women with opportunities to freely and effectively participate in the economic development of their countries through the establishment of sustainable business ventures. Through training, mentorship and capacity building, the Network supports business women's associations and existing business women generating a much-needed upsurge of growth-oriented, African women entrepreneurs.

#### ***African Women in Agribusiness (AWAB)***

The African Women in Agribusiness Network (AWAB) addresses challenges in food security and identifies opportunities for women in the agricultural sector. The network advocates for initiatives that enhance women's competitiveness in local and global markets. AWAB also seeks to foster market linkages for women, connecting them to projects in the agricultural sector that can improve their access to resources, knowledge and training.

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### ***New Faces New Voices (NFNV)***

New Faces New Voices (NFNV) advocates for women's access to finance and financial services. The network aims to bridge the funding gap in financing women-owned businesses in Africa and to lobby for policy and legislative changes. The overall objective of the network is to advance the financial inclusion of women by bringing more women into the formal financial system.

### ***Women in Media Network (WIMN)***

The Women in Media Network (WIMN) is the latest Pan-African network established by the Trust. It comprises a network of African women journalists who individually and collectively use their influence and voice to help shape and disseminate empowering storylines about Africa's women and children.

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### **About Women Advancing Africa Partners**

#### **APCO Worldwide**

APCO Worldwide is a global communication consultancy. We help the most innovative organizations adapt and thrive in this fast-moving, interconnected and complex world, enabling them to reach their business and societal goals. We bring our clients' work to life creatively and digitally through diverse thinking and a campaign mentality that is not limited by any particular service or discipline, but embraces a variety of integrated tactics to achieve success. APCO is a majority employee- and women-owned business. For more information, please visit [www.apcoworldwide.com](http://www.apcoworldwide.com).

#### **The UPS Foundation**

UPS is a global leader in supply chain and logistics operating in over 220 countries with 440,000 dedicated employees. It offers a broad range of solutions including the transportation of packages and freight; the facilitation of international trade, and the deployment of advanced technology to more efficiently manage the world of business.

The UPS Foundation leads its Global Citizenship programs, combining philanthropy with the resources of the company and the skills and volunteer spirit of UPS employees to help build stronger, safer, more resilient communities around the world. Advancing women is central to that mission and UPS is committed to creating opportunities that help women reach their full potential. Through its work with trusted partners like CARE, Opportunity International, Accion International, Catalyst, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and the Graça Machel Trust, The UPS Foundation connects women with the training, markets, resources and support needed to grow their business and strengthen their families and communities.

#### **Johnson & Johnson Innovation**

Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies comprises the world's largest healthcare business and its presence in Africa dates back to 1930, including business operations, public health programs and corporate citizenship. Through innovation, collaboration, local engagement and programs like the Africa Innovation Challenge, Women in Innovation and DREAMS, the company is: empowering African youth and African women to thrive and become drivers of change; cultivating Africa's innovation through health technology hubs; expanding R&D skills and capacity among African scientists; catalysing healthcare infrastructure investments; enhancing collaboration with local health delivery partners; boosting education and training resources for healthcare workers; and improving access to medicines.

#### **Intel's Girls and Women Commitment**

Today, millions of girls around the world have little or no access to education. Intel believes that education should be a fundamental right for everyone and recognizes the major role technology plays in improving both the quality of and access to education. Through access to technology, scholarships and community learning



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programs, Intel provides girls and women with opportunities for quality education and personal growth. Intel is a trademark of Intel Corporation in the United States and other countries.

### **American Tower Corporation**

American Tower, one of the largest global REITs, is a leading independent owner, operator and developer of multitenant communications real estate with a portfolio of approximately 148,000 communications sites. For more information about American Tower, please visit [www.americantower.com](http://www.americantower.com)

### **FSDT**

Established in 2004, the Financial Sector Deepening Trust's (FSDT) work aims to develop market systems that benefit underserved individuals, households and enterprises, offering them capacities and opportunities to improve their lives. This involves addressing challenges, and supporting innovations and market interventions in the financial sector through partnerships with financial sector stakeholders. For more information on FSDT, please visit [www.fsd.or.tz](http://www.fsd.or.tz)

### **CNBC Africa**

CNBC Africa is Africa's most powerful multiplatform business media brand, owned by Africa Business News, and is part of the CNBC global family. CNBC Africa provides Africa and the globe with business and financial news, first.

### **The Nation Media Group**

The Nation Media Group (NMG) is the largest independent media house in East and Central Africa with operations in print, broadcast and digital media, which attract and serve unparalleled audiences in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. As a brand, we are committed to creating, packaging and delivering high-quality that will inform, educate and entertain our consumers across the different platforms, keeping in mind the changing needs and trends in the industry. In our journey, nothing matters more than the integrity, transparency, and balance in journalism that we have publicly committed ourselves to. NMG journalism seeks to positively transform the society it serves, by influencing social, economic and political progress.

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