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The Coca-Cola Company Pledges to Empower 5 Million Women Entrepreneurs by 2020

Coca-Cola Announces "5 BY 20", An Ambitious Goal to Empower Women Entrepreneurs Across the World

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- At a plenary session on empowering women at the Clinton Global Initiative, Muhtar Kent, chairman and chief executive officer of The Coca-Cola Company, today pledged to empower 5 million women entrepreneurs throughout Coca-Cola's global business system by 2020.

This pledge builds upon a commitment made by The Coca-Cola Company in 2008 to the United Nations "Business Call to Action" to grow the Company's Micro Distribution Centers (MDCs) in Africa. MDCs are an independent network of entrepreneurs who distribute Coca-Cola's beverage products to retailers, often by bicycle or pushcart. At last year's Clinton Global Initiative, the Company committed that 50% of all new MDCs would be run by women. The Company is well on track to achieve both targets as part of its commitments to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

"Our experience on the great continent of Africa and the model of our existing MDC program provides an expanded platform to empower an additional five million women worldwide over the next ten years. We need to increase awareness that better societies can be created as a result of empowering women," Mr. Kent said.

Research conducted by the Harvard Kennedy School and engagement with local stakeholders on Coca-Cola's MDC business in Africa indicates that women face three main barriers to success: 1) Lack of access to finance; 2) Lack of business skills training; and 3) Lack of access to mentors and networks of peers. The Company plans to conduct further research with potential partners to better understand how to empower women across its global system.

"Enhancing economic opportunities for women in the Coca-Cola value chain will result in increased incomes, enhanced skills in business, increased stature within the community, and improved potential for communities," Mr. Kent stated during the session, which was moderated by Katie Couric, anchor and managing editor of CBS Evening News, and featured panelists, Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia. Mr. Kent indicated that the Company and its bottling partners - together with civil society and government partners - would work together over the next year to build a detailed plan toward meeting this goal.

"With today's announcement, Coca-Cola has issued an ambitious challenge with the potential to transform millions of lives, significantly contributing to community development while driving business success - a great example of sustainability. This is exactly the type of investment that we need in order to reinvigorate our economies and foster long-term,

sustainable growth," said Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State.

"The only way we are going to have a profound and lasting impact on global issues is by joining the forces of business, government and civil society to pool our collective expertise and experience" said Mr. Kent.

This new pledge capitalizes on the Company's presence in over 200 countries and its business model which relies on millions of small-scale distributors and retailers, many of whom are women. To meet this far-reaching target, the Company will build on best-practices in its business system worldwide, encourage innovation, and seek the insights of women executives as it considers how to break down barriers faced by women in its value chain.

The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company (NYSE: KO) is the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. Along with Coca-Cola(R), recognized as the world's most valuable brand, the Company's portfolio includes 12 other billion dollar brands, including Diet Coke(R), Fanta(R), Sprite(R), Coca-Cola Zero(R), vitaminwater, Powerade(R), Minute Maid(R), Simply(R) and Georgia(R). Globally, we are the No. 1 provider of sparkling beverages, juices and juice drinks and ready-to-drink teas and coffees. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy the Company's beverages at a rate of 1.6 billion servings a day. With an enduring commitment to building sustainable communities, our Company is focused on initiatives that protect the environment, conserve resources and enhance the economic development of the communities where we operate. For more information about our Company, please visit our website at www.thecoca-colacompany.com.

Source: The Coca-Cola Company