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Embargoed for publication until 12:01AM GMT February 17, 2008

Leading Foundations to Form mHealth Alliance

Landmark study of mobile technology for global health also launched at GSM conference

BARCELONA, SPAIN (February 17, 2009) – Three of the world’s leading foundations involved in global health, technology and humanitarian assistance—the Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and The Vodafone Foundation—announced today at GSMA’s Mobile World Congress an agreement to form the [Mobile Health \(mHealth\) Alliance](#), a partnership that will work to maximize the impact of mobile health, especially in the developing world.

Terry Kramer, Vodafone Foundation Trustee said: "I believe it is critical for us to harness the benefits that mobile technology can bring to global healthcare, in both sociological and economic terms."

He continued: "When you consider that there are 2.2 billion mobile phones in the developing world, 305 million computers but only 11 million hospital beds you can instantly see how mobiles can create effective solutions to address healthcare challenges. Mobile technology is providing new hope in the provision and promotion of quality healthcare in a number of ways, such as accelerating the collection and storage of patient data, training rural professionals and personalizing the way patients receive medical treatment."

The formation of the Alliance resulted from a July 2008 Rockefeller Foundation-hosted conference on the future of mHealth, in which participants identified the need to increase collaboration in cross-sectoral and pan-regional partnerships to improve healthcare delivery in the developing world. Participants included representatives of Cisco, Google, Microsoft, Nokia, and Qualcomm, as well as the Earth Institute, MIT and the UN World Health Organization.

“Mobile technology can enable significant progress toward reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals relating to health. This mHealth Alliance will provide a platform to bring the technology and health sectors together to maximize the impact mobile technology can have in improving health across the developing world,” said Daniel Carucci, Vice President for Global Health at the [United Nations Foundation](#), which operates a £15 million partnership with The Vodafone Foundation using mobile technology to advance UN humanitarian work.

The mHealth Alliance will encourage the development of scalable, sustainable and open-standard health solutions that can be made widely available through creating partnerships that strengthen the potential of mobile technology. It will also support project implementation and commissioning rigorous research on the opportunity for mHealth.

A new report, [*mHealth for Development: The Opportunity of Mobile Technology for Healthcare in the Developing World*](#), commissioned by the United Nations and Vodafone Foundation Technology Partnership, is also being launched at the GSMA conference. It is the most comprehensive report of its kind, surveying the current mHealth landscape and highlighting over 50 examples of mHealth projects in developing countries.

Ariel Pablos-Mendez, Managing Director at the [Rockefeller Foundation](#) said, “The rapidly-growing field of mHealth is a case study of smart globalization—dynamic partnerships fostering innovative, sustainable solutions to make the broadest possible progress in developing communities. The mHealth Alliance is particularly important as it sits at the apex of mobility and global health advancements. This is a multi-stakeholder opportunity that can bring benefits to mobile operators, healthcare systems and patients alike.”

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About the UN Foundation and The Vodafone Foundation Partnership

The United Nations Foundation & Vodafone Foundation Partnership strives to be the leading public-private alliance using strategic technology programs to strengthen the UN’s humanitarian efforts worldwide. Created in October 2005, with a £10 million commitment from The Vodafone Foundation matched by £5 million from the UN Foundation, the Partnership has three core commitments: (1) to develop rapid response telecoms teams to aid disaster relief; (2) to develop health data systems that improve access to health data thereby helping to combat disease; and (3) to promote research and innovative initiatives using technology as an agent and tool for international development. Further information can be found at: www.unfoundation.org/vodafone.

About the Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation works around the world to ensure that individuals, communities, and institutions can tap into growth and opportunity while building stronger resistance to risks and challenges. Since 2005, the Rockefeller Foundation has launched major efforts to bolster local resilience to the global climate crisis, mobilize an agricultural revolution in Africa, rebuild New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and shape more sustainable transportation policies in the United States. In 2008, the Foundation commenced a \$70 million Campaign for American Workers to develop new policy proposals and financial products that promote and protect savings, access to healthcare, and secure retirements. For more information, visit www.rockfound.org.

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