PRESS RELEASE

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New SMS Tool Underscores Importance of Mobile Technology to Global Development Agenda

kiwanja.net data collection enhancement poised to transform rural NGO initiatives

Cambridge, UK, 2 March, 2009: kiwanja.net, developer of mobile technologies for social change, today announced the release of FrontlineForms – a new SMS tool which enables low-cost, real-time data collection and aggregation for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and field workers addressing the most pressing needs of rural communities throughout the developing world.

"NGOs working in emerging countries face many challenges in their humanitarian and development initiatives – particularly in meeting the needs of poor rural communities," said David Edelstein, Director of Information and Communication Technology Innovation at Grameen Foundation's Technology Center. The Center focuses on harnessing the unparalleled opportunities information and communication technologies provide to improve the lives of the world's poorest people by creating jobs, improving access to health care, education and other services, and connecting far-flung communities to each other. Edelstein continued, "As access to mobile devices in rural communities continues to expand, appropriate mobile technologies will be crucial for NGOs and others helping poor people improve their lives and livelihoods."

Today many NGO field workers manually collect information, entering information into a centralised database over time – for example, when returning to headquarters. With the FrontlineForms tool a single mobile phone can be used to collect structured data while off-line. Collected data can then be sent via SMS from a mobile phone in the field to a central database where it can be aggregated, analysed and shared.

Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) conducted field-tests of FrontlineForms in Niger – a country of more than thirteen million people in which remote populations live in some of the harshest deserts in the world. "Simplicity is crucial for on-the-ground organisations using data collection and dissemination systems," said Grégory Rebattu, Niger Representative for TSF. Rebattu continued, "We see a real potential for FrontlineForms to collect important health indicators and monitor cases in remote areas."

FrontlineForms is an important enhancement to FrontlineSMS – kiwanja.net's free, multi-use text messaging platform which has helped NGOs in more than forty countries use text messaging to deliver a range of humanitarian and development initiatives. Masabi – an influential developer of secure mobile applications – built FrontlineSMS and FrontlineForms. Students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology validated the new SMS tool's architecture with the needs of isolated communities in mind.

By integrating a data collection tool into FrontlineSMS kiwanja.net is further opening up the potential of mobile technology to transform a global development agenda which today includes healthcare, the environment, food security, poverty reduction and election monitoring. As this agenda evolves, the launch of FrontlineForms means NGOs have a powerful, new mobile technology tool to use – not solely to deliver their initiatives, but to decide how to advance these initiatives in line with the unique needs of the rural communities they serve.

"Technologies that advance social change in the developing world will continue to centre on mobile applications and rural community realities," said Ken Banks, kiwanja.net Founder. Banks explained, "In this sense the potential for FrontlineForms will be fully realised once it gets into the hands of individuals who can and will use the tool to revolutionise ways NGO's advance rural development initiatives."

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About kiwanja.net

Since 2003, kiwanja.net has been committed to helping non-governmental organisations (NGOs) use information and communications technology (ICT) in their work. Specialising in the application and advancement of mobile technologies in particular, kiwanja.net provides a wide range of ICT-related services, drawing upon over 22 years of experience of its Founder, Ken Banks. For further details on kiwanja.net or on Ken Banks visit www.kiwanja.net.

About FrontlineSMS

- FrontlineSMS is free software that turns a laptop and a mobile phone into a central communications hub.
- Once installed, the program enables users to send and receive text messages with individuals or with large groups of people through mobile phones.
- The FrontlineSMS application has an intuitive user interface which is designed so that users with little or no experience with computers are able to use the application with minimal training.
- The software which can be used anywhere around the world, does not require an Internet connection and works on all GSM networks and an increasing range of phones.

Originally developed in 2005, the latest version from FrontlineSMS – which was made possible by a grant from The MacArthur Foundation – was released in June, 2008. For further details on FrontlineSMS or to download the software visit www.frontlinesms.com.

About FrontlineForms

- FrontlineForms is a free SMS tool that works on many Java-enabled mobile handsets, creating an accessible adoption proposition for development initiatives in rural areas where the range – old to new – of mobile technology devices varies widely.
- The FrontlineForms client can be loaded onto mobile phones which support Java, covering the majority of handsets made in the last 5 years.
- Technical or IT expertise is not required to implement FrontlineForms – the tool's data collection and aggregation capabilities and the hosting of the central database are handled by FrontlineSMS.
- FrontlineForms is a highly cost-effective alternative to the expense of commissioning wireless computer terminals or Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) – an expense that is out of reach of many NGO's, grassroots organisations and community groups.

To use the FrontlineForms tool, firstly download FrontlineSMS at www.frontlinesms.com. For further details on FrontlineForms visit www.frontlinesms.com/forms.

About Masabi

Masabi is a secure mobile applications developer based in the UK. Its EncryptME security system has been validated by BT and certified by NIST, the US Government's security standards body. In line with the latest web security standards EncryptME provides end-to-end security for all mobile communications by SMS, GPRS, NFC and local data storage on most Java-enabled handsets. The company's expertise in secure, usable mobile applications which run on even the lowest specification phone handsets is currently being used in a range of mobile commerce, ticketing, casino and financial applications. Masabi has also designed the mobile barcode standard which was adopted by the UK rail operating companies (ATOC) in December 2008. Masabi which is owned by its directors, won the IET Security Award in 2007, was a runner up in the "True Mobile Start-Up" category at the Mobile Innovation Global Awards in 2008 and was selected as a finalist for the Red Herring 100 Europe. For further details on Masabi visit www.masabi.com or contact Nick Dillon at nick.dillon@temono.com.

About Grameen Foundation

Grameen Foundation is a global non-profit organization that combines microfinance, technology, and innovation to empower the world's poorest people to escape poverty. Its global microfinance network and technology initiatives reach an estimated 45 million people in 28 countries across Asia, Africa, the Americas, and, through Grameen-Jameel Pan-Arab Microfinance, Ltd., in the Arab World. Based in Washington, D.C., Grameen Foundation was founded in 1997 by Alex Counts, who began his work in microfinance with 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank. Dr. Yunus is a founding and current member of Grameen Foundation's board of directors. For more information on Grameen Foundation, please visit www.grameenfoundation.org

About Télécoms Sans Frontières

Télécoms Sans Frontières was created in 1998 and is now the leading NGO specialised in emergency telecommunications. With bases in France, Thailand and Nicaragua, TSF is ready to respond to emergencies worldwide within 48 hours. Since its creation, TSF has intervened in over 50 countries, serving millions of victims and over 500 NGOs and UN agencies. A partner of UNICEF and OCHA within the UN Emergency Telecoms Cluster, TSF is a designated "First Emergency Telecoms Responder". An independent non-governmental organisation, TSF is supported by some of the biggest telecommunications companies and foundations, and maintains a partnership agreement with the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). For further details on Télécoms Sans Frontières visit www.tsfi.org. To read Grégory Rebattu's guest blog post about FrontlineSMS and FrontlineForms visit www.kiwanja.net/blog/2009/02/tsf-frontlinesms-and-humanitarian-assistance-in-niger/.

Recent comments about FrontlineSMS

"One of the largest and most ambitious mHealth programs in the world…"

Vital Wave Consulting for the UN Foundation-Vodafone Foundation Partnership, 17 February, 2009
mHealth for Development: The Opportunity of Mobile Technology for Healthcare in the Developing World

"…intentionally flexible software program…"

Steve Mollman for CNN Technology, 2 January, 2009
Text service provides more than a Band-Aid for rural health service

"…think about it. This platform has to work on hundreds of different handsets and modems… in languages ranging from Swahili to Cantonese… it needs to work with Windows, Mac and Linux. Not child's play…."

Clark Boyd, 25 June 2008
Etherized: views from the wired and wireless worlds