

Vital Wave Contributes to the GSMA Development Fund's new mWomen Initiative Catalyzing Action to Empower Women with Mobile Phones

Leading up to International Women's Day, the GSMA Development Fund hosted a workshop on Mobile Phones and Women (mWomen) last week in London. During this workshop, cross-sector leaders from organizations as diverse as CARE International, Telenor and the South African government discussed how to accelerate women's ownership of mobile phones for social and economic empowerment. These discussions centered on a wide range of issues including overcoming the barriers to phone ownership by women and tailoring mobile services – such as mLearning, mFinance, mHealth -- to the unique needs of women.

The workshop is evidence that GSMA's new mWomen Initiative is already catalyzing action towards empowering more women with mobile phones. This initiative was launched following the release of "*Women and Mobile: A Global Opportunity*," a report authored by Vital Wave Consulting and sponsored by the GSMA Development Fund and the [Cherie Blair Foundation for Women](#). The report, introduced last month at the Mobile World Congress, found that empowering women with mobile phones can bring social and economic benefits to women and their families. For example, the study found that nine in ten women feel safer and more independent because of a mobile phone, while nearly half of women are using mobile phones to increase their employment opportunities or incomes. Furthermore, closing the mobile phone "gender gap" in low and middle income countries would add 300 million new subscribers and represents a \$13 billion revenue opportunity to mobile operators. CEO and Founder of Vital Wave, Brooke Partridge, who presented an overview of the report to the attendees of the workshop, remarked that "this gathering demonstrates that both the private sector and the development community recognize the unique opportunity identified in the report to extend the benefits of mobile phone ownership to more women. The presence of such diverse and important players who are ready to act quickly on some of the report's key recommendations is a very hopeful sign that this opportunity can be seized by both the mobile industry and the development community."

The mWomen Initiative coincides with prominent development organizations' renewed focus on women and girls, with a particular emphasis on the use of technology. The Clinton Global Initiative has designated the empowerment of girls and women as one of its action areas for 2010. Meanwhile, the United Nations is creating a consolidated and more powerful agency dedicated to improving the well-being of women. The mWomen initiative is capitalizing on

this international momentum to showcase the potential for improving women's lives through mobile communications.

About Vital Wave Consulting:

Vital Wave provides strategy consulting to accelerate sustainable growth in emerging markets. Through highly specialized consultants and field teams around the developing world, the company provides strategy consulting and market intelligence to Fortune 500 firms and global foundations. Vital Wave's work is focused specifically on the intersection of technology and emerging markets. The firm engages with clients in topic areas such as mServices, eHealth, micro-finance, remittances, low-cost devices and alternative business models.