

Bank of America and Vital Voices Invest in Emerging Women Leaders in South Africa Through Global Ambassadors Program

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Mentoring Forum Will Develop a Global Action Plan to Accelerate Women's Decision-Making Power

Today Bank of America and Vital Voices convened a mentoring forum in Cape Town, South Africa, to develop a global action plan to engage the international community in increasing the number and impact of women leaders as decision-makers. The effort is part of the Global Ambassadors Program, a Vital Voices and Bank of America partnership, which mobilizes accomplished professionals as mentors for talented women leaders in developing countries.

The forum in Cape Town from June 26 to 30 brings five Global Ambassadors (mentors) and more than 20 international women leaders together to advance the dialogue on the value and impact that women's leadership will have in the discussion around the post-U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals, which range from dramatically reducing poverty to providing universal primary education, are top priorities agreed upon by all the world's countries.

The five mentors participating in the South Africa event are Wendy Luhabe, co-founder, Women Investment Portfolio Holdings; Inez McCormack, founder and advisor, Participation and the Practice of Rights; Denise Menelly, operations executive, Global Commercial and Corporate Banking, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Jennifer Taylor, chief operating officer, Asia Pacific, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; and Ann Veneman, former executive director, U.N. Children's Fund and former Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The events in South Africa build on the inaugural mentoring forum that took place earlier this year in Haiti, where Global Ambassadors worked with mentees and more than 100 Haitian women leaders to develop a platform for the reconstruction of the country and the role of women in this effort.

"Mentoring is a critical path to leadership and an undeniable link to helping female leaders achieve economic, political and social change. We are encouraged that the inaugural mentoring forum in Haiti is expanding the capacity of women leaders in Haiti and confident that our collaboration with Vital Voices will help emerging leaders in South Africa to be a driving force for change," said Jennifer Taylor, chief operating officer, Asia Pacific, Bank of America Merrill Lynch. "Through the Global Ambassadors Program, we are helping to provide hundreds of women around the world the skills and tools they need to positively contribute to their communities, the global economy and a more sustainable future."

The Global Ambassadors Program is part of Bank of America and Vital Voices' ongoing commitment to investing in leadership development, a goal guided by the belief that strong leaders are vital to healthy, vibrant communities and help advance economic growth. Over time, mentors and their mentees build critical communications, advocacy and business skills and develop strategies for emerging leaders to advance their work.

"Today's unprecedented global challenges necessitate strong leadership. Now more than ever, creative solutions and innovation are needed to propel sustainable progress," said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership. "Training and mentorship that connect emerging women leaders with mentors will foster regional and international collaboration across sectors to address these global challenges. Advancing dialogue on the value of women's leadership in South Africa is a significant step in the work of the Global Ambassadors Program and we are delighted that the events in Cape Town will further the efforts of mentees as leaders in their community."

The next Global Ambassadors Program mentoring forums are set to take place later this year in Mumbai, India and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

For more information on the Global Ambassadors Program, visit www.bankofamerica.com/globalambassadors.

Bank of America

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Vital Voices

Vital Voices Global Partnership is a leading non-governmental organization that identifies, invests in and brings visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their communities. Founded by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 1997, the organization trains and mentors women leaders as agents of transformative change in economic development, human rights and political participation. The Vital Voices Global Leadership Network includes more than 12,000 leaders representing 144 countries who have trained and mentored 500,000 additional women and girls in their communities. Visit www.vitalvoices.org to learn more.

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