

Faith-based finance and blockchain explored in pre-Summit roundtables

Blockchain seen as an important tool for sustainable finance and these efforts are complemented by increasing awareness about the role for faith-finance organizations to collaborate on sustainable finance

Baar, Switzerland, April 25, 2018 – Experts and industry leaders from the blockchain, sustainable finance and faith-based financial institutions came together in Baar, Switzerland for a series of back-to-back roundtables hosted by the RFI Summit and Thomson Reuters. The two roundtables, organized by European Partners for the Environment and Banco de la Nación Argentina, and UN Environment, respectively brought together nearly 40 speakers and participants to discuss how they can multiply their impact through greater cooperation to enhance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Accords.

The first roundtable opened with an address by Mr. Javier Gonzalez Fraga, President of Banco de la Nación Argentina, who highlighted the role for the financial sector to contribute to environmental and social development. The impacts from economic activities on the environment and to society are not currently being accounted at their full value when economic and financial decisions are being made.

His address was followed with a welcome address from Ms. Delfina López Freijido, Director for Sustainable Finance, G20 Unit at the Ministry of Treasury for the Republic of Argentina who outlined the commitment by the government of Argentina for sustainable finance to be on the G20 agenda during 2018 meetings. Discussions from this first roundtable will be incorporated into a “Partnership Agreement on Blockchain for Sustainable & Inclusive Finance”.

The Partnership Agreement will be signed in Buenos Aires on 21 September 2018 during a conference hosted by the Bank of the Argentine Nation titled ‘People & Planet: Inclusive Finance for Social Inclusion’ in view of the G20 under the Argentine Presidency, by financiers as well as representatives of civil society including faiths dignitaries. H.E. Cardinal Turkson will be one of the dignitaries addressing the Buenos Aires conference.

The second roundtable discussed faith-finance organizations' involvement in sustainable & inclusive finance, organized by UN Environment (UNEP). The roundtable opened with an address from Dr. Iyad Abu Moghli, Principal Advisor for Strategic Engagement with Faith-based Organizations at UN Environment about their new strategy for engagement on environmental and social issues through a faith-oriented lens. UN Environment, the highest authority among the UN system on environmental issues, is providing a platform for connecting financial institutions and faith-based organizations to meet the demands for products and services needed for a transformational faith-consistent financing system to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Representatives from the Ethical Investment Advisory Group at the Church of England, the Islamic Development Bank, the World Council of Churches and multi-faith initiative GreenFaith discussed the many consistencies across faith groups’ beliefs on the environment. Discussions focused on how to build upon these similarities to encourage greater cooperation on important environmental issues.

Members of both UNEP FI, a public-private partnership between UNEP and the financial sector and RFI Foundation presented examples of financing that supports positive impact as an example for the

assembled participants with Société Générale representing UNEP FI members and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) representing the RFI Foundation's members.

Blake Goud, CEO of the Responsible Finance & Investment (RFI) Foundation commented: "We were excited by the discussions on sustainable & inclusive finance with diverse participants brought together around the common objective to increase the effectiveness of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The themes of faith-based finance and applications of blockchain for sustainable finance are a perfect preface to the RFI Summit, organized around the theme of 'Impact Finance and Technology'".

For more information about the RFI Summit 2018, please visit www.rfisummit.org.

About the Responsible Finance & Investment Summit 2018

The Summit, to be held on 26 and 27 April 2018 at the Atlantis Hotel by Giardino in Zurich, Switzerland, brings together key stakeholders within responsible finance to build connections to new growth opportunities and more measurable impact. The RFI Summit will play a vital role in connecting representatives from across the global responsible finance industry to build on the growing cooperation between SRI, ESG and Islamic finance. The RFI Summit in Zurich is an initiative of the RFI Foundation and Swiss Arab Network to build awareness of shared values that can bring socially responsible investing (SRI), environmental, social and governance (ESG) and Islamic finance together to increase their positive impact.

About RFI Foundation

The RFI Foundation is a non-profit organisation with a mission to identify a neutral, nonpartisan and universal value proposition that encourages convergence of responsible finance practices. RFI evolves Sustainable, Responsible, Impact Investing (SRI), Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and the Islamic finance sectors towards a convergence of their shared standards, and engages stakeholders to build the responsible finance industry as a catalyst to support equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic development. Visit us at www.rfi-foundation.org

About Swiss Arab Network

The Swiss Arab Network (SAN) is a non-profit networking organisation with headquarter in Zurich and affiliations in the Arab world that strives to bridge gaps, promote sustainable exchange and intensify the mutual understanding among Swiss and Arab people. SAN is a networking platform and organises events and gives speeches on topics like Swiss and Arab finance, business, culture, art and film. Established and high-profile organisations from Switzerland and the Arab world are members of the network. Visit us at www.swissarab.org

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