



# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 Brussels, Belgium

## Global leader in cooperative banking, Rabobank, to give key note address spotlighting Africa's financial tools at upcoming AFIF.

In the framework of the United Nation's 'Year of the Cooperative', Rabobank will be highlighting the financial tools and the importance of providing accessible financing to the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector (SMEs) in Africa during this year's **Africa Finance & Investment Forum (AFIF 2012)**.

**Berry Marttin**, Executive Board member responsible for the International Rural and Retail division, Rabobank International, will be a key note speaker at the Forum, discussing Rabobank's initiatives throughout Africa and providing his insight and expertise on topics linked to the issues currently affecting the sector as well as his vision for the sector's future.

"Africa has a strong long-term growth potential because of the existence of resources in this continent," **Marttin** explains. "Rabobank Foundation's aim is to support savings and credit associations and farmer-producer organizations in about 11 African countries with technical assistance, microfinance, trade finance and guarantees."

The Forum, entitled "*Financial inclusion through SMEs & Cooperatives*", is promoted by **EMRC** and held in partnership with **Rabobank** at the [Rabobank Headquarters](#), the Netherlands, from **17-19 June 2012**.

"In the course of more than 110 years, Rabobank has grown from a collection of small, cooperative rural banks into the largest all-finance bank in the Netherlands. Today, we are also the world's leading food & agri bank and a globally respected strong rated bank. Taking its cooperative basis as a starting point, Rabobank puts the common interest of people and communities first," says **Berry Marttin**. "The basic principle of a cooperative is that members 'own' the company. Their interests have to be served and they are involved in the governance and influence the strategy and the risk management of our banks," he adds.

The role of the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector (SMEs) and cooperatives across Africa can no longer be ignored and must be encouraged to grow. They are the backbone of economic growth throughout the world. This year's AFIF Forum will gather leading global representatives from a variety of sectors to highlight the financial tools, solutions and growing policy trends to ensure Africa's economic growth for Africa's Small and Medium Enterprise sector (SMEs). The discussions and proposals to be highlighted at the forum are essential for a cross section of African sectors to establish their full economic potential.

A growing number of organisations and businesses will be present at AFIF 2012, such as **FMO - Rabo Development - Rabobank Foundation - IFC, World Bank - IFAD - AfDB (African Development Bank) - Centenary Bank - Shell Foundation - GIZ (German International Cooperation Organisation) - Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovations - Oikocredit - FARA - Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation - Clifford Chance - Wageningen University - Agriterro - HEINEKEN - I&P - Hivos - AFRACA - AMSCO - Rectory Foods, Ltd - AFRACA (African Rural & Agriculture Credit Association) - Global Development Co-operative - Centenary Bank** - among many other from Africa, Europe, America and Asia.



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AFIF 2012 will provide a platform for new and improved financial tools to be spotlighted, with a particular focus on mechanisms adapted and unique to the African business model. **Business-to-business (B2B)** meetings which are tailor-made to ensure maximum business partnership success will be organized over two days. Previous forums have seen over 1,000 of these meetings set up over a 2-day period. The international media will spotlight the various speakers and interview a select group of participants to highlight regional and local business ideas and trends.

The first two days of the Forum will be held in Utrecht and the third day will be held in partnership with **Food First**, which includes guided visits to one of the world's biggest **Horticultural Expo - Floriade 2012 (Venlo-Netherlands)**, organized once every ten years.

Interested participants are urged to contact EMRC International and book a place for AFIF 2012. Please contact [info@emrc.be](mailto:info@emrc.be)  
For more information about sponsorship and speaking opportunities please contact **Inês Bastos** at [ib@emrc.be](mailto:ib@emrc.be) or visit [www.emrc.be](http://www.emrc.be)

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## About EMRC

Established in 1992 in Brussels, EMRC is a non-profit International Association composed of a network of entrepreneurs, financiers, consultants and officials based throughout the world. EMRC's mission is to lead the private sector in Africa to sustainable economic development and to drive regional change via partnerships.

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## About Rabobank

The Rabobank Foundation works to improve the lives of disadvantaged people worldwide. Our philosophy is based upon Rabobank's cooperative heritage and close community involvement. Since 1973, the Rabobank Foundation has supported projects that promote economic participation and self-sufficiency. We are active in the Netherlands and internationally, providing both financial aid and technical support.

## About AFIF

The Africa Finance & Investment Forum is one of EMRC's showcase events, aims at strengthening Africa's private sector by encouraging partnerships and attracting investments. The forum is for entrepreneurs interested in securing finance for their projects, for private investors looking for projects, as well as for policy makers, financiers and bankers.