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To Whom It May Concern:

This is to support the note by Annette Riggs, President of the International Reciprocal Trade Association, dated 4 June 2013, regarding the Banglapesa vouchers.

The Banglapesa vouchers, along with other complementary barter currency systems, were recently discussed at an international conference on "Potential and Limits of the Social and Solidarity Economy" organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), held at ILO Headquarters in Geneva from 6-8 May 2013.

All information on this conference can be found on the following website: www.unrisd.org/sse.

The social and solidarity economy is an emerging development strategy that aims to promote more resilient and sustainable local economies, based on the values of cooperation and mutual support among local economic actors. Within this framework, a special session was organized on alternative finance and complementary currencies, to discuss the potential of various tools such as complementary local barter currency systems to support local development strategies. It was found that local barter currency systems, such as the Banglapesa vouchers, can be very useful where local productive capacities are under-used due to a scarcity of national currency in circulation within a local territory. The vouchers enable trade to happen among local producers and consumers, which otherwise would not happen.

These systems cannot in any way be associated with forgery or counterfeiting for the simple reason that they do not seek to replicate in appearance and legal status the national currency. It would be similar to equating the use of air-miles to fill under-used capacities in airlines, hotels, restaurants, car rental and other services to forgery. These vouchers cannot in any way threaten the integrity of the national currency, especially since, as in the case of the Banglapesa, they can only be used within a strictly limited local territory. Even when this territory extends to the surface of a country like Switzerland, where WIR has been in use with the approval of the Central Bank since the 1930s, many studies have shown that they play a counter-cyclical role: when the economy faces an economic downturn, the use of the WIR increases among the network of small enterprises that have adhered to the system.

During the aforementioned conference, it was noted that the Banglapesa experience was a source of inspiration for replication in at least one other country in Africa. Its continued use would therefore be of service not only to the local community where it is implemented in Kenya, but also for communities in other parts of the world.

Yours respectfully,



**NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON
SERVICE (GENEVA)**

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