SUMMARY OF THE 2013 EAST AFRICA PHILANTHROPY CONFERENCE
White Sands Beach Resort, Mombasa, Kenya from 24th to 26th July 2013
‘Philanthropy and Business: Is It Business Unusual?’

Traditional forms of philanthropy are currently evolving to solve increasing social and economic problems that continue to bedevil the globe. A time has come to explore local creative and sustainable strategies that ensure philanthropy achieve maximum impact. It is noteworthy that the social development sector is increasingly applying key private sector principles in its operations in a bid to significantly boost the impact of charitable work while at the same time enhancing financial sustainability. On the other hand, there has been a rise in corporate responsibility as more business open up to increased community engagement. Be that as it may, there exists both a parallel as well as a nexus between philanthropy and business and this need to be unearthed to achieve social development in East Africa.

It is against this backdrop that the 2013 East Africa Philanthropy Conference was held at the White Sands Beach Resort, Mombasa, Kenya from 24th to 26th July 2013. The sessions were led by renowned practitioners in philanthropy who employed a mix of expert information sharing sessions with a range of participatory learning approaches. The resource persons guided the delegates through the complexities and dynamics of social impact philanthropy while engaging them in constructive dialogue on how to ensure sustainable philanthropy.

The Conference brought together over 130 participants from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, France, Ethiopia, United States of America and Britain. Themed, ‘Philanthropy and Business: Is It Business Unusual?’ the discussions interrogated on the one hand whether time is ripe for philanthropic outfits to adopt business strategies to achieve sustainability and impact and on the other hand explore the place of the private sector in social development.

The Conference was not only been a learning hub for the participants but also a forum for sharing experiences. Corporate were called upon to seek more to serve while philanthropic organizations were urged to ‘think outside the box’ in terms of creativity and innovativeness in the wake of changing times.

The key points of focus throughout the conference were:

1. **Sustainability** of philanthropic interventions was singled out as one of the areas organizations in the philanthropy needs to focus on in a bid to enhance sustainable programmes, empower beneficiaries and achieve greater impact. Some of the proposals that were advanced included: institutionalizing philanthropic efforts, creating/strengthening the existing social development structures to respond better to social needs through impact philanthropy models.

2. Creation of an **enabling environment** to propel the growth of philanthropy by seeking advancement of public policy and legislations in support of local philanthropy. In addition stakeholders were called upon to build a vibrant platform for vibrant collaborations through partnerships and networking.
3. **Advancing social impact:** emphasis was made on the need for tools to monitor and measure social impact. There was a sense of frustration that there lacked a coordinated and meaningful system to measure impact or access money for value among philanthropists in the region.

4. **Philanthropy and Technology:** participants acknowledged the impact of technology including new media in communicating impact, fundraising, and raising awareness on different causes.

5. **Community engagement and participation** to ensure that philanthropic interventions are owned at the local level. Discussions affirmed the need to have strong local/ grass root actors to sustain existing interventions and discourage dependency. Voices call upon actors to recognize and tap into community resources.

6. There was a call for CSOs to enhance systems of transparency and accountability to gain more trust within the society they work with.