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**MIT Public Service Center Launches Platform for Invention and Entrepreneurship as Public Service**

Competition will engage the worldwide MIT community and collaborators in tackling humanitarian challenges

The MIT Global Challenge, a new initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Public Service Center, will launch on January 7, 2011 as the Institute celebrates 150 years of service to the world. It is anticipated that more than 30 MIT-based teams will compete for a total of \$150,000 in awards with up to \$25,000 per team that enable winning teams to implement novel solutions to some of the world's urgent challenges.

The MIT Global Challenge is an online platform that connects and awards teams of public service innovators led by full-time MIT students. The website will unite students, the worldwide MIT community, and their collaborators in identifying barriers to well being in communities around the world, encouraging teams to work together to develop and pilot innovative solutions to those problems.

Sally Susnowitz, Director of the MIT Public Service Center, has described the MIT community as, "a community of ingenious problem solvers who enjoy solving challenging problems." The MIT Global Challenge, she says, "invites and supports the entire MIT community worldwide in applying their creativity and knowledge to help people in need throughout the world by working with them to create innovative and effective solutions to their problems."

Key features of the competition platform include the ability for anyone to define problems in communities they care about, tools that enable teams to enter innovative solutions to those problems, a marketplace for "Help Wanted" and "Help Offered" ads that connect users with teams, and a community-wide voting process in April 2011 that will decide the winners of up to five \$5,000 "Community Choice" awards.

The MIT Global Challenge builds on the success of the annual MIT IDEAS Competition (<http://ideas.mit.edu>), which has awarded more than \$260,000 to 64 teams since 2001. Teams have worked to address issues of water and sanitation, health and accessibility devices, disaster relief and recovery, energy and the environment, and more. Past teams have worked in partnership with communities in 26 countries and received more than \$3.4m in follow-on funding to further develop and launch new ventures around their innovations.

“MIT is a compassionate, involved community,” says Susnowitz, “and the interplay of all of the members working together is a powerful force for good in the world.” For a list of past winners, visit <http://globalchallenge.mit.edu/teams/winners>. For a list of 2011 teams, visit <http://globalchallenge.mit.edu/teams>

The MIT Global Challenge is a project of the MIT Public Service Center, developed in partnership with MIT150 and the MIT Alumni Association. The Global Challenge is supported by MIT150, the Legatum Center at MIT, the Lemelson-MIT Program, Monster Worldwide, the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance, the SEVEN Fund, and many generous individual donors.

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### **About the Presenters**

#### **MIT Public Service Center**

At the heart of the MIT mission statement is a call to serve the nation and the world—and this charge is embodied by the MIT Public Service Center (PSC). Since its founding in 1988, the PSC’s system of support has helped students learn how to meet challenges and manage projects with innovation and creativity. From teaching a child to read in a Cambridge public school to traveling to Ecuador to continue work on a rainwater filtration tank project, the experiences are meaningful and far-reaching. Learn more at: <http://mitpsc.mit.edu>

#### **MIT150: Inventional Wisdom**

In 2011, MIT will celebrate 150 years of excellence in teaching and research with a spectrum of academic and service programs, performances, and exhibits. Key components of the program include the series of six MIT150 Symposia, for which registration is open to all; the MIT150 Exhibition at the MIT Museum, opening to the public on January 8; an Open House on April 30, when MIT will welcome all visitors to campus for a day of tours and activities; and the Global Challenge, a vehicle for the MIT community worldwide to engage in innovative entrepreneurship for the public good. Among these signature programs will be others that celebrate the arts at MIT, the advancement of knowledge through research, and the service to nation and world that has always been central to MIT’s mission. Learn more at: <http://mit150.mit.edu>

#### **MIT Alumni Association**

The world-wide MIT community – more than 123,000 alumni live in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five territories, and in 159 other countries – is uniquely positioned to inform, support, and invest in today’s young problem solvers.

It is estimated that 25,800 companies founded by MIT alumni employ about 3.3 million people and generate annual world revenues of \$2 trillion, producing the equivalent of the eleventh-largest economy in the world. Imagine if we applied that kind of entrepreneurial talent to today’s urgent humanitarian challenges.

MIT alumni are members of one of the most diverse, talented, and invigorating communities in the world. The Alumni Association is a gateway to this community. The Association provides services and resources that strengthen alumni's ties to MIT across every stage of life and around the globe. Learn more at: <http://alum.mit.edu>

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