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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Debra Pacio, African Diaspora Network,

debra@africandiasporanetwork.org

Peter Allen, 408.396.1847, peter@peterallenmedia.com



African Diaspora Network Appoints New Board Chairperson and Four New Board Members

Silicon Valley nonprofit announces new leadership to guide African business and economic development

SAN JOSÉ, CA – The African Diaspora Network (ADN), a Silicon-Valley based nonprofit with more than a decade of work promoting business and economic development across African communities, has announced the appointment of Josh Ghaim, PhD, as Chair of the Board as well as four new board members: Raj Aji, Josephine Fubara, Rick Levenson, and Kedest Tesfagiorgis. They join a cohort poised to create lasting and meaningful change for the African diaspora through innovation, social entrepreneurship, and impact investing.

“It is an honor to be working alongside such an esteemed group of changemakers to drive our work forward,” said Twum Djin, Head of Engineering at Stripe Issuing, who had served as Board Chair since 2018. “This past year has called for the time, treasure, and dedication of the board to oversee that the organization adapts and thrives in changing times. Their commitment will energize and guide the organization in an uplifting direction.”

Josh Ghaim, PhD, assumes the Chair role after having served on the ADN board for three years. Josh is Founder and Managing Partner of Ignite Growth Brands (IgniteGB), a brand and innovation accelerator focused on the health and beauty markets as well as investments and support of women and minority-led start-ups. Josh is also the Co-Founder and CEO of Small World Brands, the parent company of Nuria Beauty and Recharge Health. “I am very excited by the new additions to the board and the new energy they all bring,” said Ghaim. “I look forward to shaping the future of the organization.”

Raj Aji serves as General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer at Bill.com, a leading provider of cloud-based software that simplifies, digitizes, and automates complex, back-office financial operations for small and midsize businesses. He has executive experience working with legal, financial technology, e-commerce, enterprise, and media companies in Silicon Valley and around the world. Speaking about his new role as a board member, Raj said, “I am thrilled to be working with ADN on furthering its vision to promote sustainable development in Africa and underrepresented communities in the U.S. through investment, philanthropy, and innovation.”

Josephine Fubara is the Chief Science Officer of Consumer Healthcare at Sanofi, where she and her team are responsible for innovation at a €5billion-plus business. Josephine is a leader in her field, with over 22 years of experience in the global pharmaceutical industry, from North America to Asia. Prior to Sanofi, she served as the Global Head of R&D for all Over the Counter categories at Bayer Consumer HealthCare and spent more than 18 years in various technical and business roles at Pfizer Consumer Healthcare, where she led innovation and

development in pain, respiratory, and digestive health. “Engaging Africans from the diaspora to be a part of the development of Africa is essential work, and I am happy to be a part of it,” she says of her new position on the board.

Rick Levenson is the Chief Technology Officer of Rippleworks, a nonprofit foundation relentlessly focused on the needs of social ventures, providing the practical support entrepreneurs and their teams need to improve more lives across the global south. Previously, he had spent his career as a technologist, starting in the early days of Silicon Valley, from research labs to nascent startups. Rick is excited to “help foster and grow the power of the diaspora through philanthropy, investment, and innovation.”

Kedest Tesfagiorgis leads the Global Partnerships & Grand Challenges team within the Discovery & Translational Sciences group at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Kedest is deeply committed to building collaborative, inclusive, long-term partnerships that address the biggest challenges in health and development. Her career has been rooted in the conviction that, as a global community in pursuit of equity, we go faster and further by working together. “The diaspora has a unique perspective that makes us powerful changemakers when we mobilize to support our communities across the continent and in our adopted homelands,” she said. “I am excited by this opportunity to harness the resilience, talent, and intellect of our diaspora to build a healthier and more prosperous world.” Kedest will serve as a non-voting board member.

“Our board of directors is a wonderfully diverse manifestation of our mission to bring together Africans on the continent, in the diaspora, and friends of Africa,” said Almaz Negash, ADN Founder and Executive Director. “These leaders enrich our work on behalf of a community that largely goes unnoticed yet contributes a great deal to the economies and societies where we live. They also provide a layer of accessibility to those who may not immediately see themselves as part of our community”

Negash also recognized the retirement of Duncan Goldie-Scot, Co-Founder and Former Chair of Musoni Kenya, Ltd., after three years of service on the ADN Board of Directors. Goldie-Scot participated in one of the ADN’s first Impact and Innovation Forums, and his insights were key to shaping the framework and thematic design of the flagship African Diaspora Investment Symposium (ADIS).

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About African Diaspora Network (ADN)

Founded in 2010, African Diaspora Network promotes entrepreneurship and economic development on the African continent and in the communities in which we live. ADN brings together Africans on the continent, in the diaspora, and friends of Africa to actualize their full potential, activate their entrepreneurial spirit, and strategically mobilize financial and intellectual resources to ensure a brighter future for the African continent. Learn more at www.africandiasporanetwork.org