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PRESS RELEASE

BNP Paribas partners with the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, the NGO created by artist and social activist Forest Whitaker, to foster peace and encourage entrepreneurial initiatives among young people in South Africa

- BNP Paribas and the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) are announcing the signature of a five-year partnership within the framework of a program in South Africa aimed at helping young men and women from Cape Town districts to fill the roles of peacemakers and entrepreneurs within their community.
- On the year of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this partnership extends the cooperation that has been established in California between WPDI and Bank of the West, the BNP Paribas' US retail banking subsidiary. It completes the Group's worldwide action in favour of youth inclusion, with a strong dynamic in France where BNP Paribas is one of the most committed companies to provide school and professional support to young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Within the framework of the *Youth Peacemaker Network*, WPDI's flagship program that will be deployed in the Flats area of Cape Town, 360 young leaders will receive trainings in new technologies, conflict resolution and business management, as well as the necessary resources to enable them to carry out their projects with every chance of success. They will become mediators and committed entrepreneurs within their community, exerting a positive influence on 60,000 other young people and residents.

Present in 73 countries, BNP Paribas has been supporting for many years several initiatives aimed at encouraging professional and social integration of young people; such as *Dream Up*, the international arts educational program for underprivileged young people sponsored by the BNP Paribas Foundation. In France, BNP Paribas has been developing for 15 years a comprehensive policy for equal opportunities, especially with *L'Association de la Fondation Etudiante pour la Ville*, *ADIE* and *Nos Quartiers ont du Talent* in the context of *Projet Banlieues*, the *Odyssée Jeunes* program with the General Council of Seine-Saint-Denis and with the collective of social enterprises and associations gathered since October 2018 within *L'Ascenseur*.

Created in 2012 by the American artist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, Forest Whitaker, WPDI is a non-governmental organization offering educational tools to young men and women living in areas affected by violence, war and poverty, providing them with improved living conditions. After deploying the *Youth Peacemaker Network* program in several East African countries and Mexico, WPDI has joined forces with BNP Paribas to extend its work to South Africa.

As part of this program, 360 young people from Cape Town's districts will be trained to become peacemakers and entrepreneurs equipped and committed to serving their community and to developing revenue-generating projects that will create jobs and services for the city's inhabitants. Aimed at encouraging leadership among young people, the *Youth Peacemaker Network* will facilitate their social and professional inclusion, while also contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program will also feature a Community Learning Centre where children, youth and residents at large will have access to connected computers, library services and a host of courses in ICT, entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, literacy, etc. Through this programme, BNP Paribas and WPDI will contribute, in particular, to the UN's fourth SDG "To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Thanks to this programme, the young peacemakers will be able to acquire skills in the field of new technologies, entrepreneurship and conflict resolution. Apart from the 360 young people receiving training, WPDI should have an encouraging impact on 60,000 young people and residents in these districts over the next five years, in particular through education, culture and community projects that will be based mainly on dialogue.

With Bank of the West, the partnership will also extend to Los Angeles, California where WPDI will expand its *Domestic Harmonizer Program* into three new schools. Students will develop skills in communication, conflict resolution, emotional self-awareness, entrepreneurship and teamwork. Over the next three years, the program will help empower approximately 2,400 young people to become leaders and champions to address problems in their schools and communities.

Forest Whitaker, artist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, declared: *"Empowering young people from vulnerable areas to help them become peacemakers and entrepreneurs, is probably one of the best investments we can make in the future of their community and their nation. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world": Nelson Mandela's famous words are more relevant on this day when BNP Paribas, Bank of the West and the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative are joining forces to promote peace in Cape Town, South Africa, and Los Angeles in the United States."*

Jean-Laurent Bonnafé, Director and Managing Director of BNP Paribas added: *"Education and the strengthening of dialogue among individuals are essential for the common future of all the world's inhabitants. BNP Paribas has been committed for many years to the social and professional inclusion of young people. Bank of the West and Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative are already working together to develop a program aimed at promoting non-violence among middle school students in the United States. The Forest Whitaker initiative is one of the most generous and effective among those led by leading figures in the arts. We are delighted to now accompany his effort in South Africa and the United States".*

Nandita Bakhshi, President and Chief Executive Officer of Bank of the West said: *"Bank of the West is committed to helping young people succeed. Through our ongoing partnership with Forest Whitaker, we've seen the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative change lives and cultivate*

future leaders. We are very excited to expand our relationship both in the United States and globally”.

About BNP Paribas

BNP Paribas is a leading European bank with an international reach. It has a presence in 73 countries, with over 196,000 employees of which close to 149,000 in Europe. The Group holds key positions in its three main fields of activity: Domestic Markets and International Financial Services, for which the retail banking networks and financial services are grouped together under Retail Banking & Services, and Corporate & Institutional Banking, centred on Corporate and Institutional clients. The Group accompanies all of its clients (private individuals, associations, entrepreneurs, SMEs, large companies and institutional clients), assisting them in realising a successful outcome to their projects, offering them financing, investment, savings and protection services. In Europe, the Group has four domestic markets (Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg) and BNP Paribas Personal Finance is the leading specialist operator for personal financing in Europe. BNP Paribas is also developing its integrated retail banking model in the countries bordering the Mediterranean, in Turkey and Eastern Europe and has an important network on the West Coast of the USA. For its Corporate & Institutional Banking and International Financial Services, BNP Paribas is European leader and has a strong presence in the Americas as well as a solid and burgeoning presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

About Bank of the West

The fundamental belief that a bank should have a positive impact on society drives Bank of the West. At a time when people demand more from companies, we are taking action to ensure our activities help protect the planet, improve people's lives, and strengthen communities. That's why we are investing where we can have a real impact: supporting energy transition, helping enable female entrepreneurs and financing innovative start-ups. As the bank for a changing world, Bank of the West is committed to sustainable finance along with our parent company BNP Paribas, which is one of the only financial organizations in the world to adopt the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Through Digital Channels and offices across the U.S., Bank of the West provides financial tools and resources to more than 2 million individuals, families and businesses.

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About Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative

The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) was founded in 2012 by artist, social activist Forest Whitaker, who is the UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace & Reconciliation as well as member of the United Nations Advocacy Group for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WPDI is a non-governmental organization that operates in countries and regions impacted by violence and poverty. We are a 501(c)(3) registered in California. Our mission is to empower young women and men living in vulnerable places to become leaders, peacemakers and entrepreneurs in their communities. We help them become mediators who will address tensions and conflict between and within communities with competence and confidence. We help them become community organizers who are equipped to reach out to other youth and undertake educational and cultural projects to promote peace, dialogue and tolerance. We help them become entrepreneurs who can create economic opportunities for themselves and their communities.

Our work is guided by our CEO/Founder's philosophy that, in communities affected by endemic violence and long-standing poverty, change must come from within. We believe that local youth—as stakeholders who are both native to their communities and nonetheless open to new perspectives and ideas—are transformative insiders uniquely positioned to be powerful agents of peace and sustainable development.



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