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Moscow

Altai in Moscow Exhibition Opens at State Museum of Contemporary History of Russia

The exposition of works by masters of craft from the Altai Republic has been made possible by support from the WWF and Citi Foundation

On June 20 an exhibition of craftwork by Altai masters opened at the State Museum of Contemporary History of Russia. The items on display include unique felt crafts, paintings, ceramics, bone carvings and souvenirs products displaying the colorful ethnic culture of the Altai people. The aim of the exhibition is to draw attention to nature conservation in the Altai Mountains through promotion of traditional arts and crafts among the local population as well as to popularize the tourist image of Altai as one of Russia's most astonishing regions.

All the masters whose works are presented at the exhibition took part in an entrepreneurship development program organized by the Citi Foundation in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2010. The Altai in Moscow exhibition vividly demonstrates the results of many years of work to develop entrepreneurship as an instrument for preserving the Altai's biodiversity. The program itself is aimed at raising the employment level of residents of the Altai Republic through a training program on the basics of running one's own business and a business plan contest. Approximately 600 people have already completed the program and nearly 500 seminars are being held throughout 2012. This year the program is focused on development of ecotourism and has been expanded to include mountainous areas of the Republic of Tuva.

"We are very proud that Citi together with the WWF is helping masters of craft achieve such wonderful results," said Zdenek Turek, Citi Country Officer for Russia and Division Head for Central and Eastern Europe. "Altai is becoming a leading center for ecotourism in Russia, and this means that the social-economic situation in the isolated mountain regions of the republic is improving. No other segment of the economy is capable of creating jobs like small business. This is why Citi has over the course of many years invested in social programs aimed at developing entrepreneurship."

"Creating sources of revenue for local residents that are not related to unsustainable use of natural resource and poaching is one of the most successful environmental conservation methods used throughout the world," said Igor Chestin, director of WWF Russia. "We hope that the opening of this exhibition will draw attention to the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion, which has been named one of 35 high-priority areas for the preservation of biodiversity on the planet, and it is also home to the snow leopard, Altai argali and other rare and endangered species."

The main partner for this program in the Altai Republic is the Sodeistvie Fund, a microfinance support fund created in 2008 with support from the UNDP/GEF Project "Biodiversity Conservation in the Russian Portion of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion".

The exhibition is also supported by the Government of the Altai Republic and the Ministry of Tourism and Entrepreneurship of the Altai Republic.

Additional information:

The Altai Republic has a population of over 200,000 people, the majority of which are engaged in animal husbandry and live and work in the Altai Mountains and steppe. One of the biggest problems impeding the development of remote regions in Russia such as Altai is unemployment, which in some villages in the region reaches 90%. As a result, the standards of living for rural residents are very low and the income of many herder families is only \$1,000-2,000 a year. These factors contribute to the proliferation of poaching and the trade of plants and animals, which directly threatens the region's biodiversity. This is why to ensure the protection of Altai's unique natural wildlife standards of living of rural communities should be improved and alternative opportunities for the local population to generate income are needed.

The Altai Republic has a unique landscape and biological and cultural diversity: more than 2,000 plant species, over 80 animal species and in excess of 350 birds species can be found in the republic as well as a whole host of historical and cultural monuments. In the Altai Mountains there are two biosphere reserves, one national park, five natural parks and two nature reserves. More than 20% of the republic is environmentally protected land. The republic

also boasts the Golden Mountains of Altai, a UNESCO world heritage site. The Altai Mountains are home to the world's largest populations of snow leopards and Altai mountain sheep (argali), which are both included in Russia's Red Book of rare and endangered wildlife.

Citi has already supported a number of WWF initiatives. At the beginning of November 2010, Citi and WWF announced the launch of a joint project to restore broadleaved-pine forests in the southwest of the Primorsky region in the Russian Far East. In spring 2011, with support from Citi, WWF volunteers planted one million Korean pine and Manchurian fir seedlings. Citi undertook this project to celebrate its one-millionth retail client in Russia, an important milestone reached in 2010.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), one of the largest international independent nature preservation organizations unites about 5 million permanent supporters and operates in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop degradation of the planet's environment to achieve harmony between humans and nature. WWF's strategic priorities are preserving the biodiversity of the planet, securing sustainable use of renewable natural resources and advocacy of actions to reduce environmental pollution and wasteful exploitation of nature.

The Citi Foundation provides support to organizations which help people improve their lives, facilitating business development and the well-being of communities throughout the world. The Citi Foundation pays particular attention to programs involving 1) micro-financing and micro-entrepreneurship, promoting financial independence; 2) small and developing business, which positively impacts economic development and creation of new jobs; 3) education for the personal and professional success of young people; 4) financial education, which helps people make responsible financial decisions; and 5) protection of the environment with a focus on supporting sustainable businesses, which creating jobs and facilitate economic growth while caring for the environment. For more information, see the Citi Foundation website: www.citigroupfoundation.org.

Citi, a leading global financial services company, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management. In 2012 Citi is celebrating the 200th anniversary of its founding in 1812.

ZAO Citibank, a full subsidiary of Citi in Russia, when it became one of the first banks with foreign capital to enter the Russian market when it first set up its office in the country in 1992. Citibank has since grown its business to be among the country's largest banks offering a full range of products and services to corporate and consumer customers. At present, the Bank has over 3500 employees; its distribution network includes retail branches, 550 ATMs and representative offices in the largest cities of Russia. Additional information may be found at www.citibank.ru.