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CONFERENCE TO SEEK INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CONSENSUS

San Francisco – The first steps in an unprecedented move to create global consensus on reforming international trade and financial organizations will be presented Monday, August 20, at a conference in San Francisco.

Speakers at the public event will include leading U.S. representatives of a Global Marshall Plan Initiative that began in Germany and Austria four years ago. Backing the plan are world leaders such as British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, President Lula da Silva of Brazil, and Franz Fischler, a former commissioner in the European Union.

The new Marshall Plan will pursue an innovative path to create consensus for its policies through business, government and civil society around the world. It will use an interactive Internet site to write and rewrite documents spelling out ways of reforming the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund -- even the United Nations -- to achieve a more effective approach than now exists to ending world poverty and addressing our environmental crisis.

Members of thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are expected to add their voices to the final product.

One aim of the Initiative is to create a tax on international transactions that would fund sustainable development. Another aim is to reform global trade and financial institutions so that developing countries can share more equally in the benefits of globalization.

"The destructive turmoil in today's financial markets makes it clear that we need a far more stable and equitable structure for the global economy," said James Quilligan, US Coordinator of the Initiative.

If successful, the plan could result in a tenfold expansion of the global domestic product in 50 to 100 years, its backers claim.

The free, day-long conference in San Francisco, co-sponsored by a local chapter of the Network for Spiritual Progressives, is the first of several that will be held to gather public support for the Initiative, leading to an international conference in 2010.

The San Francisco event will be held on Monday, August 20, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Cultural Integration Fellowship building, located at 2650 Fulton Street, across from Golden Gate Park

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