NEWS RELEASE

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The 2010 HESTIA*
Onassis International Prize in Immigrant Integration and Human Development

is bestowed on the

Mexican Association of Credit Unions from the Social Sector (AMUCSS) for their project *"Banking Transnational Rural Indigenous Communities in Mexico: Remittances, Microfinance and Local Development"*
and is accompanied by a monetary award of €50,000.

The Prize is awarded today in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, host country of the CSD of the 4th Global Forum on Migration and Development, organised by the BBVA Bancomer Foundation.

****Hestia** – the ancient goddess of the hearth, domestic life and family. Symbolizes the new home and the new life that immigrants build in the host countries and the way in which the host countries integrate them in their public life.*

The **Hestia Onassis International Prize in Immigrant Integration and Human Development** is a 3 year initiative of the Onassis Foundation. It was launched in 2009 on the occasion of the CSDs of the 3rd GFMD which was hosted in Greece and organized by the Onassis Foundation Foundation. The Prize, accompanied by a monetary award of €50,000 every year, was established in view of rewarding a remarkable social and pioneering initiative of immigrant integration and human development related to the host countries of the GFMD, with Mexico being the host of the 4th GFMD.

The Mexican Association of Credit Unions from the Social Sector (AMUCSS) is a non-profit organization with more than 20 years of experience in the creation and operation of rural financial institutions. The last 10 years have been dedicated to building rural Microbanks in migrant indigenous areas. AMUCSS has also specialized in the development of financial innovations for the poorest, as well as the design of adapted financial products for rural families. The institution has demonstrated the

longevity of its project and has built strategic alliances with the key actors on both sides of the Mexico-US border seeking to foster policies in favor of rural microfinance.

AMUCSS developed a model in transnational communities through which remittances are systematically linked to microfinance services, such as micro-savings, microcredit, and micro-insurance to increase the financial inclusion of migrant families and their communities of origin and hence promote their socio-economic development. In 10 years, AMUCSS has banked 32,843 families, belonging to 14 ethnic groups, of which 5,000 are transnational. The AMUCSS project has proved that building financial organization among transnational communities can change their life conditions, without expecting "top-down" solutions. The AMUCSS project was selected as the winner of the Onassis Hestia Prize among 24 applicants dealing with Mexican migration issues.

On the occasion of the awarding of the Prize to the AMUCSS project, Mr. Anthony Papadimitriou, President of the Board of Directors of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, said: *"We are pleased that this year's prize goes to a project that fulfils the Onassis Hestia Prize criteria. AMUCSS has focused on the creation of institutions for community development and has contributed to the personal development of each individual migrant or family that is associated with the project. The Onassis Foundation is proud that the Onassis Hestia Prize will once again contribute to the further enhancement of this valuable work."*

The Chairperson of the Prize Committee Mrs. Marianna Moschou made the following statement: *"Like in 2009, this year we had many significant participations for the 2010 Onassis Hestia Prize and the evaluation work was indeed difficult. It is once again our honour to contribute to the efficiency of this humanitarian initiative and reward a project that promotes regional development and reduces social unfairness".*

The 2009 Hestia Prize was awarded in Athens, Greece, by the Onassis Foundation, organiser of the 3rd CSD, to the Humanitarian Organization *"Médecins du Monde-Greece"* for its initiative *"Open Polyclinic".*

For more information concerning the Hestia Onassis International Prize, please visit www.onassis.gr .