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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FAWCO Biennial Conference Opens in Bern on March 6

(March 2, 2012 – Bern, Switzerland) Over 150 members are expected to participate in FAWCO's (Federation of Women's Clubs Overseas) Biennial Conference in Bern, Switzerland on March 6-10, 2013. Local and international speakers, including Ambassador Betty E. King, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, will cover a variety of global and club-level issues. FAWCO has partnered with an outstanding group of sponsors to present this year's conference, including Emmi Group, Vontobel Swiss Wealth Advisors, Highmount, US Tax and Financial Services Group, Victorinox, Vonage, International Herald Tribune, Presence Switzerland, Gerda Spillmann Swiss Cosmetics, The Hess Collection and Clements Worldwide. Conference attendees will spend the week being briefed on a variety of issues facing Americans living abroad, receiving updates on FAWCO's global initiatives and participating in educational workshops. The 15,000 FAWCO members not attending the conference may view videos of sessions and speeches online via the FAWCO YouTube channel. Photos and newsletters will be posted daily, as well as PDF copies of presentations and handouts. Anyone can follow FAWCO on Twitter at @fawco, join the conference conversation using #fawco2013 or find FAWCO on Facebook. The full conference agenda as well as speaker biographies are available at www.fawco.org.

The first keynote address of the conference will be given by Mrs. Megan Beyer, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland Don Beyer, on Thursday morning, March 7. Mrs. Beyer is an American journalist, commentator, civic leader, and an outspoken advocate for gender equality issues. Dr. Lisa Thomas from The World Health Organization (WHO) will speak to the conference on Thursday afternoon about her work on new innovative procedures to improve maternal mortality in the developing world. She is a US Board certified OBGYN specializing in family planning and has had over 15 years of experience doing field world in 20 different countries.

Friday, March 8, is International Women's Day and conference participants will celebrate with a variety of activities. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva Betty E. King will address the conference Friday morning, followed by delegates' participation in *Join Me on the Bridge, Over the Aare on the Kornhausbrücke* (www.womenforwomen.org), a global act of solidarity to bring awareness to violence against women. A panel discussion entitled *Moving Mountains – Women and Politics: Switzerland* will be held on Friday afternoon. The panel will be comprised of four women, all of whom are national-level, Swiss politicians - Claudine Esseiva, General Secretary of the FDP Women Switzerland, and National Council Members Margret Kiener Nellen, Christa Markwalder, and Barbara Schmid-Federer. Fritz Reimann, TV-Journalist at SRF Swiss Radio and Television, will serve as the moderator. Many empowering workshops will also be held throughout Friday on topics such as active aging, maternal health, climate change, local club strategies and repatriation.

Saturday morning will feature a workshop based on the book *17 Women who Shook the World*, presented by author Preethi Burkholder. Although she currently lives in the US, Burkholder is originally from Sri Lanka. She does humanitarian aid work with a women's organization in her home country called Rajarata Women's Foundation to improve the lives of women and children in remote villages. Saturday afternoon's workshops will be a choice between *FAWCO and U.S. Issues* and *Swiss Art Appreciation*.

FAWCO is fortunate to have these businesses on board as main sponsors of this year's conference:

- **Emmi Group** is the largest Swiss milk processor and one of the most innovative premium dairies in Europe. In Switzerland, Emmi focuses on the development, production and marketing of a full range of dairy and fresh products as well as the production, ageing and trade of primarily Swiss cheeses.

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Continued – FAWCO Biennial Conference Opens on March 6

- **Vontobel Swiss Wealth Advisors** is dedicated to the needs of U.S. investors. Registered as an Investment Adviser with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), we provide internationally diversified wealth management solutions to U.S. persons. We are based in Zurich, Switzerland, the world's capital of Private Banking.
- **Highmount** is an independent wealth management firm focused on the financial needs of high-net-worth individuals and families. With global investment and trust expertise, the firm has extensive capabilities to address a full range of wealth issues that clients face
- **US Tax and Financial Services Group** was established more than 25 years ago and handles the cross-border individual, corporation and trust tax affairs for those subjected to the US, UK and international tax systems. They advise and prepare tax returns for a wide range of individual and corporate clients in over 32 countries.
- **Victorinox**, the well-known pocketknife manufacturer in Ibach-Schwyz, is sending out a clear message for practical environmental protection through its Green Shield program. For the program's launch, the entire workforce of 900 was shown Al Gore's film on climate change.
- **Presence Switzerland** is in charge of the practical implementation of communication abroad. Communication abroad contributes to safeguarding Switzerland's interests abroad using various public-relations tools.
- **Gerda Spillmann Swiss Cosmetics** - make up used by First Lady Michele Obama - develops, produces and distributes natural and highly effective face care and make-up products since 1944. They use solely plant-based raw materials and active ingredients (e.g. Swiss Edelweiss extracts from organic cultivation). Skin care products are free of parabens and mineral oils. No animal testing.
- **The Hess Collection** portfolio is comprised of Hess Collection Mount Veeder Estate wines, Hess Napa Valley wines and Hess Select wines. All our estate vineyards are sustainably farmed in accordance with our founder, Donald Hess' philosophy: "nurture the land, return what you take."

Other conference sponsors include Clements Worldwide (International Insurance for Expats), Crown Relocations, Swatch, Traser Watch, Loeb Department Store, International Herald Tribune, Bern Tourism and ABC Art and Greeting Cards.

Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a global network of independent volunteer clubs and associations. There are more than 75 member clubs in 40 countries, with a total membership in excess of 15,000. FAWCO serves as a resource and channel of information for its members, promotes the rights of U.S. citizens living overseas and contributes to the global community through philanthropy and global issues task forces. A not-for-profit New York-based corporation, we are also a UN-accredited NGO with Special Consultative Status to the UN Economic and Social Council. The philanthropic arm of FAWCO - The FAWCO Foundation - is an independent entity, which has donated more than \$1,000,000 in education awards and development grants since its inception in 1967.

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