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# How the Rural Community Foundations Work: an Indian Case

By Dr. Sandeep Deshmukh

## I. Background

We are a support organization with a national level mandate in India. *Sampradaan* in *Sanskrit* means Giving Wisely. Thus, Sampradaan is committed to create a culture of thoughtful giving in Indian society. It has fulfilled the mission by carrying out a range of activities such as research on giving trends, changes required in Indian laws and administration related to charity; documentation of best practices related to traditional and modern forms of Giving, conducting educative programs pertaining to grant making and other aspects of philanthropy for donors as well as government organizations. In this regard, one of our biggest achievements is in the form of a standardized educative program for Board members of non profit organizations. We could train members of Boards of little above 400 non profits with the support of the Department for International Development, the overseas philanthropic arm of government of UK. These non profit organizations belong to socially, politically and economically underdeveloped regions of the country.

Another initiative of Sampradaan is to promote the concept of

Community Foundations as a relevant form of organized philanthropy in India. Though organized philanthropy is not new to India, it has fallen short of creating a nationwide impact and secondly also not evolved in form, substance and scale to meet the challenges of a society trying to adjust with changes.

The need for Community Foundations in India is manifold. We need them for

- Partnering with government and private sector to speed up basic development
- Ensuring that principle of social justice is upheld while distributing benefits of development
- Creating a momentum for enterprise and wealth creation

Thus, one envisages a trinity of roles for the Community Foundation in India – Provider of services (P), Advocate of law and justice (A), and Catalyst of change (C) – PAC.

Between 1985 and 2004 there were only three institutions that were formally recognized as Community Foundations in India; though there were hundreds of Community based Organizations (CBOs) – much smaller in scale and limited in

perspective. The three old Community Foundations are based in the metropolitan industrial cities on the western coast. Sampradaan with the help of community leaders established the first ever rural community foundation in South Asia in 2006. This is based in Alwar district of Rajasthan in north-west India. Impressed by the concept of Community Foundation, and development in Alwar two more CBOs approached Sampradaan to help establish Community Foundations in respective areas. After detailed assessment and deep reflection on the problems on hand, the two CBOs and Sampradaan decided to reposition them as Community Foundations.

## II. What is happening on the ground?

The Sampradaan facilitated exercise of rural philanthropy is in a nascent stage. We are testing the waters, talking with local communities, talking with corporate groups, talking with institutional donors and most important of all with the government about the role and strategies for local Community Foundations. Our three partnering emergent CFs are

- Mewat Foundation (Trust) in Alwar district in northwest (semi-arid zone)



- Sainik Sangh alias Soldiers' League in Pauri Garhwal district of Himalaya (temperate zone)
- Kodagu Model Forest Trust in South (sub-tropical zone)

Given the diversity of geography, development level and organizational history it is a challenge to draw universal lessons about what motivates, how it works and sustainability of a Community Foundation. Nevertheless, following is an attempt to draw some broad inferences and observations about the questions put to us.

## 1. Building community ownership for rural philanthropy

### 1.1. Motivating a community:

1.1.a. Every community needs some rallying points for getting together. Pockets of prosperity and development mark rural India. Therefore, there are the basic issues of development infrastructure and governance, which agitate an aspiring community. However, there are also community specific issues of development such as discrimination, hijacking of resources by the powerful, and issues of cultural identity. Highlighting these issues and showing the window of solutions helps motivating the community. For example, issues of development of Mewat are intertwined with the issues of *Meo* ethnicity.

1.1.b. The possibility of becoming visible and respected raises the spirit of individuals and prompts them to give for community causes. For example, a farmer approached Mewat Foundation (Trust) with a gift of land. On the other hand, in Kodagu district the self-aggregated role of Patrons prompts wealthy *Kodava* coffee planters to give generously.



1.1.c. Often religious ideas converge with secular ideas and enable people to give. For example, a Hindu sect of *Bishnoi* (who are in the forefront of protection of wildlife) in Rajasthan state wants to propagate the idea of harmony amongst humans and between humans and nature. They are keen to give time knowledge and other resources for anything that helps realization of their spiritual goals. An order of monks in the ancient *Shankaracharya* tradition in Himalaya is willing to help the local CF through knowledge and services. A temple trust in Kodagu is ready to give money and land to secular issues.

1.1.d. Indian society is in transition. Social groups with distinct cultural identities are getting sucked into new economic forces. They often develop a feeling of being culturally endangered. They would like to preserve their Mewati or Kodagu or *Rajput* culture as distinct as possible. Therefore, appeal to the traditions of giving in each local culture motivates them better.

1.1.e. There are community specific forms of charity. Within the fold of local culture, there are many caste and religious groups which may have common or separate forms of giving. In Mewat, Muslim Meo give to community chaste (zakaat) while Hindus give to temples and shrines. In Kodagu people give to main temple of the district and also have an interesting institution called as 'house of destitute'. The house of destitute is owned by a clan belonging to the patron Kodava caste. Members of a clan going through bad times can take refuge in the house of destitute.

(To be continued)

\* Dr. Sandeep Deshmukh presented a paper on "How the Rural Community Foundations Work: an Indian Case" at the presentation. Attended the Fall Conference on Community Foundations in San Francisco, USA, held between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The conference was hosted by Council on Foundations, USA which is the umbrella organization of US foundations/community foundations with above 200 members. Dr. Deshmukh attended the conference thanks to full scholarship provided by the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

# New Board Members

*Mr. K. N. Changappa, Major General A.P.S. Chauhan (Retired) and Dr. Suresh N. Karkhanis have recently joined the Sampradaan Indian Centre for Philanthropy as board members. Sampradaan takes this opportunity to welcome them and briefly introduce them to the readers.*

## **K. N. Changappa**

Kakamada Naniah Changappa, 61, is a retired senior tea estate manager, has been responsible for saving the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, for which he won the 'Endangered Species Award for 2001' from Wildlife Trust of India.

A graduate in Agriculture from University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, he has long been associated with wildlife conservation and Eravikulam National Park in Kerala, the only viable habitat of the Nilgiri Tahr in the world, would have been wiped out if it had not been for his unceasing efforts in its creation and subsequent protection. K. N. Changappa is the pioneering spirit behind the revolutionary concept of harnessing corporate support for wildlife, and has today made Eravikulam one of

the few wildlife sanctuaries in the world that is protected cooperatively by the Forest Department and an NGO, the High Range Wildlife and Environment Preservation Association.

Currently he is Director of the Coorg Foundation, a Trust established by TATA Coffee Ltd, Pollibetta, Kodagu, in 2002. He has **been** involved in philanthropic work in development of Kodagu and its people by supporting Institutes in Healthcare, Education, Sports, Culture and Environment. Since October 2003, he has been working as a Senior Advisor with the Kodagu Model Forest Trust, Ponnampet, an organization which is managing Kodagu Model Forest Programme, the first model forest programme in India.

He is also Advisor, Wildlife Trust of India, New Delhi, Member, Managing Committee, Coorg Wildlife Society, Member, Karnataka State Wildlife Advisory Board and Member, Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Cauvery College, Gonikoppal.

## **Major General A.P.S. Chauhan (Retired)**

Major General A.P.S. Chauhan (Retired) 70, is Vice President and General Secretary, of Sainik Sangh. Retired from Corps of Engineers, Major General Chauhan has wide experience in combat and technical fields, operational and combat engineering missions in war and peace

and was erstwhile adviser to the Chief of Army Staff. He has a Masters in Defence Studies from Madras University and is also trained in evaluation of examination systems from NCERT. A keen sportsman, he is also an alpinist, having trained at the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research.

## **Dr. Suresh Karkhanis**

A scientist by profession, a philanthropist at heart, *Dr. Suresh N. Karkhanis* has been involved in philanthropy for the advancement of science and technology in the country.

Although, he may not like the word 'philanthropy', that is what *this* Organic Geochemist/ Mass Spectroscopist, Professor Emeritus at the Analytical Research Laboratory, Department of Polymer and Petroleum Engineering, MIT College, Pune, has actively pursued most of his life. Life member of Royal Society of Spectroscopy, London, *Dr. Suresh N. Karkhanis* believes in sharing his knowledge and wealth with the people of his home town.

He has donated a US\$200,000 worth spectroscope and lab equipment to the local engineering institute.



# Community Foundations as a Catalyst of Self Regulation by Civil Society: A View from the Margins of Philanthropy

**By Dr Sandeep Deshmukh \***

The newly independent India was still under the influence of the view that ensuring welfare of the villages would ensure welfare of majority population of the country. Therefore, the country experimented with the model of 'community development' during the first Five Year plan between 1952 and 57. Interestingly the political leadership of the young nation had a clear focus on the need and potential for developing the resources of rural communities as one can read in the focus of the first Plan. There was a sharp and sudden departure from this interest with the onset of the second Plan.

The second Plan underlined development of research infrastructure, and industries. Government resources were concentrated on creation of heavy industries that enabled expansion of private manufacturing sector. In a certain way the cause of Community

Development as a gateway to national development was abandoned since that plan. A path that was chosen in the first plan that could have led to sustainable mechanisms of self-regulation by civil



society was abandoned. In the interim the position of the policymakers, planners and executive has seen several flip-flops. The theme as used today reflects more rhetoric than serious commitment by State. The

document on 'policy imperatives and programmatic initiatives' (Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-2007, Planning Commission, Government of India, chapter 8) talks about a number of measures to revive rural economy and quality of life but how much of it has transformed into deeds and impact on the ground is a big question.

Moreover there is no expansion of perspective on how these measures would incorporate will, interest and participation of communities in the

delivery process, which could still be of much help in the contemporary Indian society in transition. It should not surprise us that many of these policy imperatives have simply been reversed in practice such as 'the existing policy of pan seasonal pricing of wheat and rice...needs to be modified to encourage private storage....' (ibid.)

With half-hearted policy imperatives on one hand and growing liabilities of rural sector in general on the other hand, the implications of the situation make us sit up. In 1990 – 91 the share of agriculture in total GDP was 32 %. In the year 2005 – 06 it has come down to 20 %. This shows a steady decline in the output of rural economy.

Ironically even today overwhelming segment of our productive age population still lives in rural area. The proportion of Main Workers in rural area to total Main Workers category was 73.22 % (census 2001). These facts speak volumes about the state of general development in India and the phenomenal indifference to rural areas.

The solutions to the paradox of 'higher growth at the cost of low productivity and consumption by



majority' can be found in an enterprising manner.

The solutions can be found on a road lined by apolitical approach, partnership between social capital and wealth, partnership between government, business, voluntary organizations and communities, plethora of social and technological innovations and strengthening ethos of citizenship. This we call as perspective of community philanthropy which can be aptly described as follows, 'There is a need to nurture ideas, facilitate efforts to create and distribute wealth in accord with the principle of social justice'.

The urge to find sustainable solutions to the problem of large spread deprivation prompts us to look back at the existing and extinct forms of community philanthropy; analyze collective experiences, appreciate them and use them strategically for creating an additional force of social development in India.

Opportunities for reviving community philanthropy in general galore as

- There is maturation of associations based on class, occupation, neighborhood, volunteerism and ideology in both urban and rural areas;
- A new class of wealthy individuals emergent in both areas comprising stock traders, investors, bankers, technologists, managers,

business entrepreneurs, capitalist farmers

- Overall satisfactory spread of education creating conducive intellectual environment for experiments
- Dense presence of NGOs side by side to government in rural areas
- Pockets of wealth creation in rural areas such as 'oilseeds belt' in Gujarat; 'sugarcane belt' in Maharashtra, Haryana and western UP; 'cotton zone' of AP; and 'coffee belt' of Karnataka and Kerala
- Considerable media exposure of population in both urban and rural areas
- Demographic and communication connect between urban and rural areas<sub>1</sub>
- Visible presence of community mechanisms of relief in distress, donations for public work and religious charity in both urban and rural areas
- Strong presence of *mutts*, seminaries, *wakf* boards, temple trusts, church based charities all over the country which also serve as means of community work on occasions<sub>2</sub>
- Proven examples of community action close to philanthropy in different parts of country exist even today<sub>3</sub>

With regard to the problems and opportunities shared above, there is a scope for strengthening and developing community foundations and community funds in India.

At present there are only three CFs in the country, which are urban based. Even other new endeavors in offing are focused on urban areas. These endeavors though undoubtedly noble in intent are restricted from addressing the basic issues of disparity, deprivation, lack of infrastructure and opportunities for vast majority in the rural area of our country.

Thus, need of the hour is to create community foundations at district level to strengthen efforts with a clear focus on rural needs. There are more than six hundred districts in the country.

Thus, there is a scope for creation of six hundred or even more community foundations in the country.

*(To be concluded)*

#### ***(Footnotes)***

1 *Regions like Konkan in Maharashtra and Garhwal in Uttarakhand are known as 'money order economies'. In fact Rural Relations a social enterprise from Maharashtra has used this connect to build corridors of social investment and charity*  
 2 *Study by SICP (2002)*  
 3 *The Grain Bank of Darphal; Village Tank systems of Tamil Nadu etc.*

**\* Dr Sandeep Deshmukh presented the above paper at the annual convention Voluntary Agencies Network of India on December 17 and 18, 2007 in Kolkata.**



# PM plans advisory council of PIOs

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday announced the setting up of a “Prime Minister’s Global Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin” to draw upon the experience and knowledge of “the best Indian minds.”

“The Council would comprise of People of Indian Origin from a variety of disciplines who are recognised as leaders in their respective fields, not only in their country of residence but globally as well,” Singh said.

Inaugurating the sixth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in the Capital, the Prime Minister also proposed to promote an “India Development Foundation” to direct overseas Indians’ philanthropic efforts into human development activities in the country.

Addressing the gathering, which included Leader of the Opposition L K Advani and Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, Singh said that the advisory council would serve as a high-level platform for the Prime Minister to draw upon the experience and the knowledge of the best Indian minds wherever they may be

based.

Singh also announced the formal launch of an ‘Overseas Workers Resource Centre’ (OWRC), which will provide all relevant information and assistance to potential migrant workers. Reflecting on 2007, Singh said: “It has been a good year for the Indian economy, for our working people and for our entrepreneurs. The conditions are today favourable to achieve and sustain 9 to 10 per cent growth rates, which is our objective over the 11th Five Year Plan period. The growth process now underway will transform our economy to emerge as a major powerhouse of the evolving global world.”

He said that at the heart of the development effort is the “imperative to transform the quality of life of all our people and give them access to good health, education and economic opportunity”, adding “this is the essence of the thinking that defines our 11th Five Year Plan. “I would, therefore, like this gathering to inspire our people, inspire people of Indian origin, inspire our region and our neighbours, inspire the world to

learn to live together in peace and harmony despite our many diversities,” Singh said. Over 1,500 delegates from about 50 countries are participating in the event, organised on January 8-9 every year to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India.

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi said the Government has already entered into bilateral agreements with GCC countries like UAE, Kuwait and Qatar to ensure protection and welfare of Indians working there.

Similar agreements are also likely with Malaysia, Oman and Bahrain in the near future, he added. Ravi asked overseas Indians to contribute in their own way to India’s growth story. “We will build a strong partnership with overseas Indian community on rural development,” the minister added. Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit sought the help of overseas Indians in improving the Capital’s transport system to “decongest Delhi.”

(Source: Indian Express, January 9, 2008)

## Art For The Aged to unfold in Delhi

Delhi-based charity body Habiart Foundation recently fielded its first art auction, in association with Helpage India. The sale, Art for the Aged, was aimed at raising funds for aged people. A part of the proceeds went to the artists and Habiart. The auction, which sports a total estimated value of Rs 4.25 crore, saw 90 works going under the hammer. The auction, which was held in Delhi in mid-January, divided the 90 works broadly into three categories.

(Source: The Economist, January 15, 2008)



## Pharma Firms Draw Flak for Failing in Social Duties

By Joe C Mathew

New Delhi: Non governmental organisations (NGOs) dealing with public health are pointing fingers at pharma companies for not doing enough on the corporate social responsibility (CSR) front.

Karmayog, a leading NGO which recently carried out a CSR rating of top 500 Indian companies, says that only two drug companies - Dr Reddy's and Lupin - have done work on this front. While the two firms scored three out of five, 30 other drug firms failed to perform satisfactorily. Nine of the companies, including leading ones such as Nicholas Piramal, Panacea and Glenmark did not score at all. Aventis Pharma was the only company that had CSR programmes for its employees. The silver lining is the fact that a majority of leading Indian pharmaceutical firms have begun CSR programmes, though not in a big way. Over 60 per cent, or 21 of the drug firms, had initiated programmes in the field of health support, education, environment, community development and health awareness.

Ajit Dangi, director general of Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) differed with the NGO's observations.

"The OPPI members have been participating in CSR programmes for years now. Be it natural calamities or diseases such as HIV/AIDS, leprosy or malaria, our members are always in the forefront." Dangi said.

The organisation and S P Jain Institute of Management and Research had, in 2005, brought out a report on

CSR initiatives in the pharmaceutical industry, he added.

Interestingly, it's not the Indian drug firms alone that have come under criticism. Oxfam, in a recent global report, said that multinational pharma giants looking to expand in developing nations, need to be more socially responsible. The NGO rates the social responsibility of multinational pharmaceutical firms on basis of their pricing practices, research and development priorities and intellectual property management in developing nations.

Oxfam argues that while governments have the primary responsibility for providing access to health care, the role of the pharmaceutical industry in providing a vital element - medicines - is crucial. The NGO believes the pharmaceutical companies can contribute substantially and effectively towards increasing the access to medicines in developing countries.

"The companies' pursuit of strategies that address access to medicines merely as a reputational problem has resulted in patchy, ad-hoc approaches which have failed to deliver sustainable solutions. The industry's responses to flagging financial performance - hiking up prices, aggressively defending patents and prolonging existing ones through 'ever-greening' have undermined the need for lower prices, flexible approaches to patenting and R&D investments into diseases relevant to the developing world." Oxfam pointed out.

(Source: *Business Standard*, January 8, 2008)

## Companies to Share Eco-Friendly Patents

By William M. Bulkeley

Multinational companies including International Business Machines Corp., Sony Corp., Pitney Bowes Inc. and Nokia Corp. will unveil today what they call a patent-sharing plan for companies to donate intellectual property that improves the environment.

The project, dubbed the "Eco-Patent Commons," builds on the experience of the open-source software movement in which programmers around the world freely share their computer programs, said David Kappos, IBM's assistant general counsel for patent law, who helped design the system. He said that "the advantage of using this commons approach is efficiency, scale and visibility."

The commons will be administered by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a Geneva-based group that includes some 200 of the world's biggest companies.

Intellectual property rights to technology that solves environmental problems have been a contentious issue in negotiations over the Kyoto Protocol — which attempts to combat global warming — with U.S. negotiators resisting proposals to force companies to give away technology. John Coequyt, energy policy specialist with the Washington



office of Greenpeace, an environmental group, said that the commons is “potentially a way to solve the problem by voluntary action.” The founders of the commons are donating about 30 patents to get it started. IBM — which last year won 3,125 U.S. patents, more than any other company — is donating several, including one for recyclable protective-packaging material for delicate electronic parts. Unlike commonly used foam peanuts, the material can be recycled in the same waste stream as the cardboard box that contains it.

Nokia is donating a patent for methods of recycling obsolete cellphones into non-communicating calculators and personal digital assistants.

Some of the donated patents aren't directly environmental.

Pitney Bowes, the mailing-systems maker, donated a 1996 patent for a design that protects electronic



scales from being damaged when they are overloaded. Pitney Bowes says it got out of the scale-making business several years ago. Angelo Chaclas, deputy general counsel of Pitney Bowes, said the patent has environmental implications, because “if you have a technology that extends the life of electronics, you keep it out of the waste stream.”

He said that Pitney Bowes, which has a portfolio of 3,400 patents, was eager to support the commons in hopes of getting access to other companies' patents that it might be able to use.

Mr. Kappos of IBM said that any company can join the commons by contributing a patent. But all patents offered are available to anyone in the world on a Web site that will be maintained by the World Business Council. Mr. Kappos said that while individual patents that are donated may not be bringing in licensing revenue, or be protecting actual products, donating them still represents a gift of value. “We're pledging that we won't assert the patents that are put into the commons against anyone who is using them in an environmentally friendly way.”

(Source: Wall Street Journal, January 14, 2008)

## Red Cross to Downsize its Staff

Washington: The American Red Cross said on February 01, 2008, that it plans to lay off about 1,000 workers here — roughly a third of its national headquarters staff — at the beginning of March.

The layoffs — part of an administrative restructuring of the national headquarters — are expected to reach into nearly every part of the organization, said Carrie Martin, a Red Cross spokeswoman. “Every department here is being restructured, as far as how we're going to be doing business,” she said.

The sole exception are employees at the organization's biomedical facility in Northern Virginia, who will be exempt from the layoffs, Ms. Martin said. Instead, the biomedical section will be asked to find other ways to reduce costs.

In 2003, the Red Cross cut a total of 310 positions from the biomedical section in an effort to reduce its expenses and streamline the section.

Employees will not be officially notified of specific cuts until the Red Cross board approves the planned reduction at the end of this month, Ms. Martin said. The board and the Red Cross leadership decided that reductions were necessary last November, after they determined that the organization's revenues were \$209-million short of its annual budget of about \$3.45-billion. Many observers inside and outside the Red Cross have attributed its latest budgetary problems to the organization's fund-raising approach, which emphasizes disaster fund raising and does not focus on building on donations throughout the year.

The organization has been without a lead development officer since the departure last month of its acting chief fund raiser, Kathleen E. Loehr. Ms. Martin said the current deficit was not due to inadequate fund raising, but rather to an unsustainable expansion. In recent years the Red Cross sought to expand its programs and services but has not been able to find revenue to continue to support the new programs, she said.

# US charity list topped by living donors for first time

By Lauren Foster

New York: US philanthropists are increasingly giving during their lifetimes rather than after their deaths, with the 50 most generous Americans committing \$7.3bn to charity in 2007, according to the Chronicle of Philanthropy.

That figure is up slightly from 2006, when donors made gifts of \$6.6bn (•4.5bn, £3.4bn), excluding Warren Buffett's historic donations of \$43.5bn.

"We had more living donors in 2007 than gifts through bequests," said Stacy Palmer, Chronicle editor. "More people are giving while they are alive as they see urgent needs and want to take care of them. They also want to be involved in giving away their money and not just leaving it to their heirs."

Last year was the first time since the Chronicle started compiling the list in 2000 that all 10 of the biggest gifts came from living donors. Ms Palmer said 2007 was an "extraordinary" year, given that there were 20 gifts of at least

\$100m at a time when there were fears about the economy. Universities, museums and libraries were among the biggest beneficiaries. Twenty of the top 50 donors gave to their private foundations. Ms Palmer attributed some of the largesse to Mr Buffett, who in June 2006 pledged the bulk of his fortune to charity - mainly to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. His gift inspired others to think about their philanthropy, she said, adding: "Buffett is not on this year's list but you can see his fingerprints on it."

Topping the Philanthropy 50 list, which will be published today, is Barron Hilton, former co-chairman of Hilton Hotels. Last month he pledged \$1.2bn, his windfall from the recent sale of the Hilton Hotels Corporation and the pending sale of Harrah's Entertainment, the world's biggest casino company, to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation established by his father. Mr Hilton

also said that he intended to follow further in his father's footsteps by giving 97 per cent of his fortune to the foundation when he died.

Among the top 10 givers in 2007 were: Jon and Karen Huntsman (\$750m); T. Denny Sanford and George Soros (\$474.6m); John Kluge (\$400m); Sanford and Joan Weill (\$328.5m); Michael Bloomberg, New York City's mayor (\$205m); T. Boone

Pickens (\$200.8m); Robert Day (\$200m); and Eli and Edythe Broad (\$176m). Ms Palmer noted that two bequests, from the hotel magnate Leona Helmsley and

Helen Walton, widow of the Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, would probably have led the list, but their multi-billion-dollar estates had not yet been settled.

As for the outlook for 2008, "all indications are that the very wealthy are doing well enough and will continue to be generous", Ms Palmer said.

(Source: *Financial Times*, January 15, 2008)



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