



PRESS RELEASE

UNCDF and SafeBoda launch an e-commerce platform for food and grocery home delivery amid COVID-19 and beyond

April 29, 2020, Kampala, Uganda - The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and SafeBoda Uganda announced today a partnership to provide an e-commerce platform that will connect market vendors to customers during the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown and beyond. Targeting an initial 800 market vendors, this e-commerce platform will connect the market vendors to households that need a range of supplies by using the preexisting reliable SafeBoda transport service.

Through such innovative partnerships, UNCDF is able to catalyze the growth of the digital economy in Uganda by empowering populations that have been left behind to go digital and access previously out-of-reach digital solutions that can help to keep their businesses afloat, whilst ensuring that households do not run out of food supplies - much more presently in temporary transport ban as coronavirus mitigation lockdown.

Chris Lukolyo, the digital lead at UNCDF in Uganda, said: “During this COVID-19 pandemic, many small businesses have not had an opportunity to leverage digital solutions to keep their businesses afloat due lack of access to the relevant digital products and sometimes inadequate digital literacy. By partnering with SafeBoda, UNCDF seeks to catalyse enterprise innovation and investment that will spur small businesses and consumers to embrace digital platforms in their daily lives which will in turn drive growth and sustainability.”

Through this partnership, UNCDF and SafeBoda will provide 800 market vendors access through the SafeBoda app whereby they can sell their produce while creating and maintaining the livelihoods of the 18,000 SafeBoda riders whose source of income has been affected by the ban on public transport, and at the same time, leverage its riders and users base to share vital information and safety practices about COVID-19. This will in turn allow an average of 50,000 customers to be reached daily with food stuffs and goods delivery. Post COVID-19, it is envisaged that some customers having experienced the convenience and quality service using the SafeBoda e-commerce platform will continue to use such digital platforms increasing inclusion and simultaneously bolstering resilience for similar future shocks and stresses. SafeBoda will expand their value offering by adapting to include food items from market vendors and scaleup by enrolling more customers onto their electronic commerce platform to multiple livelihoods affected by the lockdown in one way or another.

Nicholas Kamanzi, the Head of SB Shop at SafeBoda Uganda, said “Our mission is to empower local entrepreneurs to thrive at the click of a button and this partnership is exactly that. Given the COVID-19 situation, access has become an even bigger problem for many Ugandans and we believe that we can start being part of the solution by providing a platform for food market vendors & customers to easily sell and buy their goods respectively. Of course not forgetting the SafeBoda riders (the true heroes) doing contact free delivery from the markets to the customers as a key part of this solution.”



As part of the partnership, UNCDF is providing technical and financial support for design, rollout and implementation of the e-commerce platform, while at the same time monitoring and learning how such e-commerce platforms can address the impacts of COVID-19 and beyond.

This industry growth also resonates with the UNCDF's goal of providing "last mile" finance models that unlock public and private resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development.

"UNCDF's approach considers that the interactions of service providers with customers are based on a network of digital platforms, as well as an environment supported by an adequate infrastructure and regulations and policies. That is why we appreciate the involvement of the Kampala Capital City Authority and Ministry of Kampala in supporting this innovation," Lukolyo added.

Early success story

Since Uganda went on a lockdown on March 22, many small and medium businesses have lost revenue due to reduction in customers arising out of limited movements.

Miss Ruth Tindyebwa is one of the hundreds of vendors affected. Most of her customers used to shop from her stall on their way from work. With restrictions in movements, her customers have drastically reduced. Tindyebwa is one the first market vendors that SafeBoda has signed on and trained as part of this partnership. " My clients now order through the SafeBoda app. I feel protected because the riders wear gloves and masks. I also always wash my hands after serving each customer," Tindyebwa says.

For the first since she started her business, her daily sales have hit the UGX500,000 mark. "The most amazing part is that I can save for my children's school fees on my e-wallet as I wait for the schools to reopen after this lockdown," Tindyebwa says.

Such stories of change and growth demonstrate that by addressing everyday challenges, we can drive the growth and sustainability of the entire digital ecosystem.

About UNCDF

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world's 47 least developed countries. With its capital mandate and instruments, UNCDF offers "last mile" finance models that unlock public and private resources, especially at the domestic level, to reduce poverty and support local economic development.

UNCDF's financing models work through three channels: inclusive digital economies, connecting individuals, households, and small businesses with financial ecosystems that catalyze participation in the local economy, and provide tools to climb out of poverty and manage financial lives; local development finance, that capacitates localities through fiscal decentralization, innovative municipal finance, and structured project finance to drive local economic expansion and sustainable development; and



Unlocking Public and Private
Finance for the Poor

investment finance, that provides catalytic financial structuring, de-risking, and capital deployment to drive SDG impact and domestic resource mobilization. By strengthening how finance works for poor people at the household, small enterprise, and local infrastructure levels, UNCDF contributes to Sustainable Development Goal-SDG 1 on eradicating poverty and SDG 17 on the means of implementation. By identifying those market segments where innovative financing models can have transformational impact in helping to reach the last mile and address exclusion and inequalities of access, UNCDF contributes to a broad diversity of SDGs.

About SafeBoda

SafeBoda was founded in 2015 to bring innovation and community to the rapidly growing motorcycle taxi industry in Africa. At the click of a button SafeBoda provides a safe, convenient, mobile-first urban transportation solution for Africa's booming young population. Founded in Kyebando, Kampala, SafeBoda has built a community of over 18,000 branded, equipped and trained boda drivers.

In addition to taking a ride, customers can now order food from their favourite restaurants and also shop for their daily needs using the SafeBoda app. The app provides seamless access to customers to over 300 merchants and also connects them to a trained, professional rider who delivers to their door.

SafeBoda also has a wallet function, allowing customers to enjoy a cash-free and stress-free experience in the app by topping up using Mobile Money. Our vision is to empower local communities to thrive facilitated through safe urban transportation to millions of Africans thus improving livelihoods and mobility across the continent.

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