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World Bank and IFC's Lighting Africa Program Endorsed by Partners in Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya, May 27, 2009 — Lighting Africa, a joint World Bank and IFC developmental initiative, has received the full endorsement of key local and international industry players to promote an expanded market for alternative, off-grid lighting products for millions of people in Africa living without access to electricity.

Lighting Africa's endorsement came during a workshop on quality assurance for off-grid lighting held on May 21 and 22 in Nairobi, Kenya that launched the program in Kenya. The workshop sought input from key market stakeholders in order to define a common strategy that will promote new quality standards on lighting products.

Russell Sturm, Lighting Africa Program Manager, said: "The backing of local and international manufacturers and distributors is a big leap in the direction of improving the quality of products accessible to consumers. It paves the way for new lighting products, and their potential for helping millions who now rely on inefficient kerosene lamps or other sources of light in Kenya and Ghana."

The workshop was attended by 60 delegates representing low income end-users, bulk-purchasing agents, government regulators, lighting manufacturers, NGOs, importers, and buyers, including wholesale and retail customers. An advisory committee including 20 delegates was formed to support Lighting Africa.

Lighting Africa has developed a four-part quality assurance strategy which supports market development, provides technical advisory services to quality oriented companies, protects the interests of low-income consumers, and addresses issues related to the design or manufacture of off-grid lighting products.

Lighting Africa is also supporting an awards program to recognize promising alternative lighting products or ideas. The first round of awards is expected to be announced during the 2010 Lighting Africa Conference in May, 2010 in Nairobi.

Comments and questions are welcome at: qualityassurance@lightingafrica.org
For more information on the Lighting Africa program, go to: www.lightingafrica.org