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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VGIF Secures New Executive Director to Guide Organizational Growth

New York, NY – The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) – supporting women and girls in developing countries since 1968 – welcomed Elisabet Eklind as its new Executive Director on May 13, 2013. Ms. Eklind brings more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit management and leadership, as well as a particular expertise in organizational growth and development.

Since its inception VGIF has operated mainly with board and volunteer resources and Ms. Eklind was hired to lead the effort of developing the organization's capacity and increasing its impact on the lives of women and girls in developing countries. Executive Director Elisabet Eklind will work closely with the VGIF Board of Directors to implement the new operations plan, focusing on improving the grant making processes and increasing the fundraising efforts, while developing the office and assisting the Board in its transition toward a focus on governance.

"Ms. Eklind was selected after an intense and thoughtful search," said Eileen Menton, VGIF board president. "She joins VGIF at a pivotal time as we embark on a new phase in our organization's history. She will play a key role in helping us meet our commitment to continue to strengthen the women's global movement by funding projects that address the self-identified needs of women and girls and tackle the most challenging issues facing our world today."

"VGIF supports a unique group of small grassroots organizations in developing countries," said Ms. Eklind. "The organizations are led by women and support women and girls on issues such as equal access to education, reproductive health, entrepreneurship, and widows' rights. I look forward to building on the great success VGIF has had as a volunteer-operated organization and to further increase its impact."

The 2012 Millennium Development Goals Report states: "Gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government. Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals. Further progress to 2015 and beyond will largely depend on success in these interrelated challenges." VGIF is committed to continuing to be a force in helping grassroots organizations making a difference in the lives of women and girls who face these challenges. To that end, the VGIF Board of Directors recently approved funding of 39 projects in 20 different countries, providing support totaling 290,800USD.

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The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) provides small grants for grassroots projects that empower women and girls in developing countries. Over the years, VGIF has supported women in developing countries through more than 400 successful projects in over 70 countries, focusing on issues such as economic empowerment, community development, health and nutritional support, literacy and leadership training, educational seminars and workshops, and science and human rights education. In 2004, VGIF was granted consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).