Ford Smart Mobility introduces impressive range of innovative experimentation to address practical mobility challenges in urban and rural Africa

- Ford Smart Mobility is Ford Motor Company’s plan to help change the way the world moves through innovation in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience and big data
- Ford X-Car Social Innovation Action Partnership (SIAP) enables building of partnerships to address range of mobility and community challenges
- Working with Riders for Health, Ford’s Data Driven Healthcare experiment launches in Gambia using data collection technology to create maps of undefined areas and produce a mobility snapshot of vehicle usage helping service efficiency

South Africa - Johannesburg August 11th, 2015 – Ford Smart Mobility is Ford’s plan to use innovation to go to the next level in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience and big data. Since the beginning of the year, Ford has been conducting a range of experiments and developer challenges around the globe, including in Africa, to gain a better understanding of consumers’ mobility needs.

The multi-faceted Ford Smart Mobility plan includes Data Driven Healthcare – a way in which healthcare for rural areas can be improved, the Ford X-Car initiative allowing multiple organizations to develop support programs based on data gathered to assist rural communities and remote areas, and Multimodal Urban Mobility solutions for urban commuters and small businesses to combine multiple methods of transport including eBike technology to make commutes faster and more efficient.

“Our goal is to make people’s lives better by changing the way the world moves,” said Erica Klampfl, Global Mobility Solutions Manager, Ford Research and Advanced Engineering. “The Ford Smart Mobility plan supports our commitment to innovation and is aimed specifically at developing smarter transportation systems. This initiative extends far beyond vehicles and includes investing in a range of mobility pilots and experiments. Such ongoing research projects help us to find out what works and to develop smarter, more connected mobility solutions.”

Flexible Use and Ownership

Ford today also announces Ford X-Car Social Innovation Action Partnership Program, a new mobility experiment. The program supports public–private partnerships by using Ford vehicles as the transportation backbone to deliver goods and services to under-served communities – providing mobility to the community without needing direct ownership or liability of mobility assets.

“With the X-Car program, we’re using innovative partnerships to bring critical services to communities in South Africa, including access to health care, purified water and education,” said Kim Pittel, Ford’s Vice President Sustainability, Environment & Safety Engineering. “X-Car is a good example of a sustainable mobility solution, where we develop a new transportation model to bring services and programs to those in need and contribute to a better world.”

The Ford X-Car will be equipped with an OpenXC plug-in device, a connectivity platform enabling analytic insights from the vehicle and its day-to-day activities. Ford Smart Mobility experiments could provide significant insight through data analytics that will help devise mobility solutions for millions by working with partners such as World Vision.
“The Ford X-Car program could potentially give our community members greater accessibility to improved vaccination coverage and critical healthcare, thereby decreasing the mortality rate. World Vision envisions directing or transporting, patients to emergency facilities. For example, maternal deaths are still a huge challenge in rural South Africa with 310 deaths for every 100,000 births in 2011,” said Cheryl Ennis Self, Executive Director, Global Social Partnerships, World Vision USA.

There will be further opportunities for groups to partner with Ford on this initiative, from NGOs, private corporations or other charity organizations in Africa, that can help provide access to purified water, improved energy supplies as well as educational e-learning. There will be the chance to join the model and share physical space and objectives for the Ford X-Car – A prime example of how Flexible Use and Ownership allows multiple groups to share existing vehicle resources as they navigate the service network.

**Data Driven Healthcare**

Many areas of rural Africa are affected by poor or non-existent communications and infrastructure capabilities. One of the immediate effects of these conditions is the difficulty of adequate healthcare in areas that often possess no reliable transport facilities.

Ford is working with Riders for Health, an organisation that manages and maintains fleets that deliver healthcare workers to patients who need help. Equipping Ford pickup trucks with OpenXC technology will allow vehicle data to be collected that could improve productivity. The data collected is also being used to create maps of remote regions where most mapping companies do not go. By creating an expanded business framework of collaborative partnerships, Ford will become a convener of organisations who are striving to make a better world by providing sustainable mobility solutions.

“The data we have derived from our ongoing experimentation combined with the implementation of our findings are key parts of our commitment to address a range of mobility challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa,” said Klampfl. “We want to apply these critical learnings to help improve the lives of those people living in remote, rural areas as well as urban dwellers faced with ever-increasing traffic congestion.”

**Multimodal Urban Mobility solutions**

As part of Ford Smart Mobility, Ford is now focusing on two key areas: Flexible Use and Ownership, and Multimodal Urban Mobility solutions. This includes exploring new ways for consumers to use and own vehicles in the future with the launch of GoDrive and Peer-2-Peer Car Sharing.

In urban areas, the ever increasing demand for road space or limited parking availability has become a major challenge for the road using commuter or commercial driver. In response to the critical traffic situation in South Africa – Johannesburg, will implement a car-free zone in the Sandton CBD during the EcoMobility World Festival and Exhibition in October 2015. The program aims to encourage behavioural change by showing the positive impact created by an alternative transport infrastructure; making Johannesburg a cycling-friendly city in the future while showcasing Johannesburg’s plans to promote sustainable transport and reduce carbon emissions.

These current and future challenges are key considerations in Ford’s ongoing research that have helped to shape the company’s Multimodal Urban Mobility solutions. Through Ford Smart Mobility, eBikes and mobile app technology are being studied to discover how they can work seamlessly with cars and public transport to improve daily commutes.

The concept MoDe:Pro eBike, unveiled at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona earlier this year, is designed and intended for commercial urban use, such as by couriers or delivery services. Drivers can use the eBike in conjunction with commercial vehicles such as the Ford Transit Connect which can act as a carrier, of up to three eBikes, and also as a support vehicle. Electric bikes offer a unique opportunity for integration with vehicles due to the ability to be easily recharged.
The MoDe:Pro eBike – built by a Ford team – connects seamlessly with a rider’s smartphone thanks to the innovative MoDe:Link app. The app harnesses real-time information regarding weather, congestion, parking costs, time, traffic and public transportation. It includes eyes-free navigation, route planning, and health and fitness information. The app also helps to identify the most efficient and cost-effective mode of transport for a journey.

The MoDe:Pro eBikes is equipped with a 200-watt motor with nine-amp-hour battery that provides electric pedal assist for speeds of up to 25 km/h.

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