

His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium pays tribute to Close the Gap's 500,000th donated computer, refurbished in Mechelen

18 February 2016, Mechelen, Belgium – Today, Close the Gap and Arrow Value Recovery welcomed HM King Philippe of Belgium to celebrate an important milestone: the refurbishment of the 500,000th donated computer at Arrow Value Recovery's Mechelen facility. Close the Gap is an international non-profit organisation providing high-quality, pre-owned computers donated by European companies to projects in sub-Saharan Africa which empower the individual and the community.

HM King Philippe was invited to witness the refurbishment of the symbolic 500,000th computer after receiving a guided tour learning about how the donated computers and mobile devices undergo rigorous data erasure protection and refurbishing measures in preparation for redeployment to local and international beneficiary projects.

HM King Philippe followed the tour by meeting with Close the Gap' stakeholders – partners, beneficiaries and donors, among them representatives from DNS.be, Deloitte Belgium, KBC Bank, Proximus, Recupel and Agoria. The group discussed the role ICT can play in socio-circular economy environments, creating sustainable jobs and reaching the most vulnerable communities living without electricity.

The event ended with a short visit to Close the Gap's Digitruck - a mobile, solar-powered, multi-purpose IT unit that aims to bridge the digital divide for learners from vulnerable and rural communities. Arrow Value Recovery sponsored the first Digitruck, bringing IT literacy for orphans in rural Tanzania and the second Digitruck has just been delivered to a township in Cape Town with support of Deloitte. The cooperation between Arrow and CTG started over a decade ago. Together they are bridging the digital gap by providing schools, clinics and micro-credit projects in developing countries with refurbished IT equipment.

"I was humbled by the opportunity to share this moment with His Majesty the King. His Majesty the King continues to serve as a source of encouragement for social entrepreneurship, job creation, and the circular economy. It was personally moving to witness the exchange between our stakeholders - beneficiary partners, donors, service partners and strategic partners - together with His Majesty the King. This meeting is a strong testament to the power of collaboration." Olivier Vanden Eynde, Founder and Managing Director, Close the Gap.

"We feel honored by His Majesty the King's visit to Arrow's Value Recovery facilities and that we were able to show him our great work and cooperation with Close the Gap", said Mark Majeske, President Arrow Value Recovery. "We are working on every front to do the ethical, responsible thing when it comes to electronics. Responsible recycling is an important piece of the value chain, but much of the value from

electronics can be realized up-stream – long before assets are sent to recycling. We live and breathe the circular economy.”

“From the moment that Digitruck arrived and classes began, a new energy came into the orphanage and Uru village. Tuleeni Orphanage Center has become a sign of hope and life line to safety for the people and they started showing up by the dozen looking to get a spot in the one of our classes! The demand has been so high, we started a waitlist for locals wanting to going back to school to get a second chance at life through education. The Digitruck has been a huge transformation across the village.” Ms. Mandy Stein, Neema International

About Close The Gap

Founded in 2003 by the Belgian Olivier Vanden Eynde, Close the Gap aims to bridge the digital divide between high-tech countries and developing countries by offering communities access to IT equipment for educational, medical and social projects. Since 2003, more than 500 000 computer assets have been donated by 225 European companies, reaching more than 1.5 million unique users in 2 100 beneficiary organizations supported in 40 countries all over the world. As an organization, Close the Gap is recognized as a NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI) and is a member of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT & Development (UN GAID) and of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). In 2009, Close the Gap founded a separated organization, WorldLoop, supporting social enterprises doing responsible e-waste collection and dismantling in sub-Saharan Africa.

About Arrow Electronics

Arrow Electronics (www.arrow.com) is a global provider of products, services and solutions to industrial and commercial users of electronic components and enterprise computing solutions. Arrow serves as a supply channel partner for more than 100,000 original equipment manufacturers, contract manufacturers and commercial customers through a global network of more than 460 locations serving over 85 countries.

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