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PRESS RELEASE/INVITATION

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NEW CHILDREN'S TELEVISION SERIES, *SESAME SQUARE*, DEBUTS IN NIGERIA ON NTA

Nigerian Adaptation of *Sesame Street* Focuses on Literacy, Math and Health Education

(Abuja, NIGERIA and New York, NEW YORK; 10 May 2011) – [Sesame Street](#), the longest street in the world, has arrived in Nigeria bringing new Muppet friends like Kami and Zobi, familiar and furry faces like Elmo and Grover, and engaging educational lessons to children and families across Nigeria. Funded by the United States Government, through [USAID](#), Sesame Square is co-produced by Nigerian production house Ileke Media and [Sesame Workshop](#), the non-profit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*. *Sesame Square* premieres **Saturday, May 21st at 9:30AM** and will air every **Saturday** in the same timeslot and **Sunday at 5:00PM** on [NTA](#). The program's story-lines were developed in collaboration with teams of educational advisors that include Nigeria's Ministries of Education and Health. Season one of *Sesame Square* consists of 26 half-hour television episodes designed to promote fundamental literacy, numeracy, health and good hygiene habits in settings that foster children's self-esteem, cultural pride, and respect for differences and diversity. *Sesame Square* will also emphasize Malaria prevention and HIV/AIDS education.

Sesame Square features Kami, a female Muppet with golden fur who is HIV-positive and has an adventurous and inquisitive nature, and Zobi, a furry blue male Muppet who is energetic,

has a sincere obsession with yams, and constantly tinkers with his taxi—which never seems to move. Together, Kami and Zobi welcome viewers to each episode and introduce a “Word of the Day” segment which showcases Nigerian children in cities and villages across the country. Special celebrity guests visiting *Sesame Square* include GT The Guitarman, Onyeka Onwenu and Adaure Achumbe. Each episode also presents the following *Sesame Street* formats known to children worldwide: *Bert and Ernie’s Great Adventures*, *Elmo’s World*, *Global Grover*, *Play with Me Sesame*, and *Sesame Street English*.

In addition to *Sesame Square* airing on NTA, literacy kits to reach 80,000 children and 2,700 caregivers that include a set of alphabet flashcards, an alphabet storybook, a story tree mat, and a puppet kit, will be distributed through local NGOs during season one to support the educational messages of the television show.

“Through *Sesame Square*, Nigerian children will have a unique opportunity to see other children just like them engaging in exciting activities and lessons that have the potential to foster a lifelong love of learning,” said Gary E. Knell, President and CEO, Sesame Workshop. “Sesame Workshop is proud to work with the United States Government through USAID and NTA to create and distribute a series that will not only introduce children to letters and numbers, but will also teach important lessons about diversity, health and the world around them.”

“Through our collaboration with Sesame Workshop to produce *Sesame Square* and the related outreach materials we hope to make a significant difference in improving the health, education and everyday lives of Nigerian children and their families,” said United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Terrance McCulley. “It is our hope that through the generous support of the American people, *Sesame Square* will help put the children of Nigeria on a positive path for a lifetime of learning and wellness.”

“We are excited to introduce children and families to their new friends on *Sesame Square* for the first time ever in Nigeria and on NTA,” said Umar Mohammed, Director of Programmes, Nigerian Television Authority. “We know that children will enjoy learning and laughing alongside Kami and Zobi as they engage in lessons that will help them lead brighter, more positive lives.”

On May 17, 2011, a special launch event for *Sesame Square* will be held at the NTA Arena in Abuja. Distinguished guests will include: United States Ambassador to Nigeria,

Terence P. McCulley, USAID/Nigeria Mission Director, Ray Kirkland, as well as the furry and lovable *Sesame Square* Muppet friends themselves, Kami and Zobi.

Generous support of *Sesame Square* is made possible by the American people and government through the [United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) and the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) (PEPFAR).

Visit *Sesame Square* on [Facebook](#) at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/SesameSquare>

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