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TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN AND ARZU STUDIO HOPE JOIN FORCES

(LONDON/CHICAGO, April 2019): Turquoise Mountain and ARZU Studio Hope, leaders in artisan training and economic empowerment in Afghanistan, announced today that they are coming together to accelerate the transformation of lives more broadly across Afghanistan through increased scale, expanded sales of artisan-made products, and deeper global consumer outreach. This combination of two well-established innovators in the arena of social entrepreneurship will enable increased numbers of skilled artisans, particularly women, to lift their families and communities from poverty and contribute to economic growth, while preserving the incredible culture of Afghanistan. Turquoise Mountain will assume leadership of the joint programmes.

After several years of close collaboration and coordination in Afghan carpet production and sales, Turquoise Mountain will take responsibility for ARZU's weaving centers in Bamiyan Province, as part of its expanding work with Afghan carpet producers, as well as ARZU's sales infrastructure and client network in North America. By the increasing visibility of its other high-quality Afghan offerings in jewellery, woodwork, ceramics, calligraphy and painting, particularly in the United States, Turquoise Mountain aims to introduce some 5000 weavers and other artisans to market in the coming years.

Turquoise Mountain CEO Shoshana Stewart said, "The future of the Afghan craft industry and its economic potential is about combining world-class quality and design, deep local connections, and collaboration, and this is the leading edge. We're thrilled to be taking our decade-long partnership with ARZU to the next level. Connie and her team have built an incredible production process, network, and brand, and Turquoise Mountain will help build upon ARZU's strong programme to connect Afghan artisans with the growing ethical sustainable goods market around the world."

Connie Duckworth, ARZU Founder and CEO said, "As early social enterprises, ARZU and Turquoise Mountain saw the potential of unleashing authentic craft as a powerful economic generator in Afghanistan. Now into our second decades, we recognize that scale and expanded market access are essential to growth. Our consolidation will allow us to achieve our next generation goals. We also hope it may serve as a helpful guidepost to others doing excellent work around the world. I look forward to assisting Shoshana and our combined teams to navigate the next frontier of social enterprise."

Shoshana Stewart and Turquoise Mountain's senior team in Kabul will oversee the combined resources of the two organisations and will lead operations going forward, under the Turquoise Mountain name, while Connie Duckworth will serve as a Strategic Advisor.



TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN



Mayer Brown LLP served as legal advisor to ARZU. The global law firm is a leader in developing innovative approaches to pro bono work and strives to pioneer projects that will have a substantial impact, both locally and globally.

TURQUOISE MOUNTAIN was founded in 2006 by HRH The Prince of Wales to revive historic areas, traditional crafts, and communities, to create jobs, skills and a renewed sense of pride. Turquoise Mountain has trained over 6,000 artisans and builders, restored 150 historic buildings in the old city of Kabul and elsewhere, and organised major international exhibitions - from the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC. Turquoise Mountain has brought over \$10,000,000 in handmade crafts to international markets, working with prestigious international retailers, from Bloomingdales and Kate Spade in New York, to five star hotels in London and the Gulf (the Connaught, Four Seasons, and Fairmont), developing products based in crafts traditions for contemporary international markets that provide viable incomes for artisans. Turquoise Mountain now works in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and the Middle East, combining heritage buildings, training and craft. www.turquoisemountain.org.

ARZU is an innovative model of social entrepreneurship that helps Afghan women weavers and their families break the cycle of poverty by providing them steady income and access to education, healthcare and sustainable community development through the sale of award-winning, ethically produced hand-knotted rugs. ARZU creates a transformational equation to poverty alleviation through the successful execution of a system of inter-locking protocols that simultaneously address multiple basic needs and impact cultural attitudes. Since its founding in 2004, ARZU has systematically shifted the paradigm of a patriarchal society in rural Afghan villages to one where women are economically empowered and literate, with the resources to care for themselves, their families and their communities. ARZU Studio Hope rugs are now gracing the floors of socially-responsible corporations, significant foundations, notable commercial design and architecture firms, and socially-conscious residential consumers across the United States and Canada. www.arzustudiohope.org.