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MEDIA RELEASE

ABSOLUTE SUSPENS AROUND SOLAR IMPULSE'S TAKE OFF TO COMPLETE FINAL LEG OF THE FIRST EVER ROUND-THE-WORLD SOLAR FLIGHT

Cairo, Egypt, 24 July 2016 – 10 days after André Borschberg's arrival in Cairo following the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, Bertrand Piccard took off with Solar Impulse 2 (Si2) for the final leg of the first ever Round-The-World Solar Flight – a pioneering endeavor considered impossible by many when initiated 15 years ago. Si2 is now heading to Abu Dhabi where it should land after a flight of two days and two nights, depending on weather conditions.

At the controls of Si2, the revolutionary airplane that flies with no fuel propelled only by the energy of the sun, Bertrand Piccard took off from Cairo International Airport, at 1:28 am local time (UTC+2) for the final stretch of the first ever Round-The-World Solar Flight, and is expected to land at the Al Bateen Executive Airport in Abu Dhabi on 26 July. For this last leg, Bertrand will be welcomed by André Borschberg who flew Si2 for the departure from Abu Dhabi in March 2015. Close to crossing the finish line and achieving the incredible goal of circumnavigating the globe with zero-emissions, Solar Impulse is now more than ever writing the future of energy efficiency.

But the suspense entirely remains for the last leg of this pioneering journey which promises to be as challenging as the previous 16, in particular due to current heat in the Middle East, especially at this time of year. The hot temperature is at the limit of the design requirements of Si2. In addition it causes, even at high altitudes, thermals and turbulences forcing the pilot to stay longer periods of time with the oxygen mask for many days in a row.

"It's very emotional to take off from Egypt with Si2, given that I landed here in 1999 after accomplishing the first non-stop round the world balloon flight. It's precisely here that started my dream of making another circumnavigation, but this time without fuel, only on solar power. I'm excited to come so close to the goal, but unfortunately there are still so many people we have to motivate before having a world running on the same clean technologies," shared Bertrand Piccard, Initiator and Chairman, currently piloting Si2 toward Abu Dhabi.

"I am very moved to see Bertrand take off for the last leg of this incredible dream. It reminds me of the first time we met to discuss this seemingly impossible mission and the excitement it created in my mind. Today, we are living the final moments of a once in a lifetime adventure contributing to setting a new milestone in aviation – one centered not on speed or height, but instead on exploring new clean and efficient technologies that can almost make it possible for the plane to fly with unlimited endurance, a week, a month; something that was never done," said André Borschberg, CEO, Co-Founder and Pilot.

To make his dream a reality, Bertrand Piccard, a medical doctor and explorer at heart, teamed up with André Borschberg, an engineer and savvy entrepreneur. Both men have been taking turns piloting Si2 around the world, but have different respective roles within the project – while Piccard outlined the project's vision and political reach and brought together the partners who provided funds and technology for this adventure, Borschberg pulled together the team that designed and constructed Si2 and drives the airplane's technological innovations into new engineering solutions.

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Thanks to the immense support of the Swiss Embassy in Egypt and the Egyptian Ministry of Civil Aviation, in particular the Civil Aviation Authority, the Cairo Airport Company and the National Air Navigation Service Company, as well as the help of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and the Egypt Tourism Authority, Solar Impulse was able to run efficient and smooth operations in Cairo and successfully prepare for the final leg of the journey. After landing in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where the adventure started in March 2015, Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg, together with their team and partners, will continue Solar Impulse's mission of advocating that concrete energy efficient solutions can solve many of the challenges facing global society today.

Thanks to 8 live cameras in the cockpit, in the Mission Control Center in Monaco and on the ground, you can be with the pilot and the engineers. We invite you to live this ultimate solar flight experience with us on www.solarimpulse.com

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Thanks to 10 live cameras in the cockpit, on the wings, in the Mission Control Center and on the ground, you can be with the pilot and the engineers. We invite you to live this solar flight experience with us on www.solarimpulse.com

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About Solar Impulse

Swiss pioneers [Bertrand Piccard](#) – Initiator and Chairman – and [André Borschberg](#) – CEO and Co-Founder – are the pilots and driving force behind Solar Impulse, the first airplane able to fly day and night without a drop of fuel – propelled solely by the sun's energy. Supported by Main Partners Solvay, Omega, Schindler, ABB, Official Partners Google, Altran, Covestro, Swiss Re Corporate Solutions, Swisscom and Moët Hennessy, and Host Partners, Masdar in Abu Dhabi and Foundation Prince Albert II in Monaco, they are attempting the first Round-The-World Solar Flight with Solar Impulse 2 (Si2) – demonstrating that clean technologies can achieve the impossible.

Si2 is a concentration of clean technologies – a genuine flying laboratory. It is a single-seater aircraft made of carbon fiber that has a 72m / 236ft wingspan (larger than a Boeing 747) for a weight of 2300kg / 5100lb (the equivalent of an empty family car). The 17,248 solar cells built into the wing power the four batteries (38.5kWh per battery) that in turn power the four electric engines (13.5kW / 17.5hp each) and the propellers with renewable energy. The plane is therefore capable of saving a maximum amount of energy during the day and flying throughout the night on batteries. Si2 requires zero fuel and has virtually unlimited autonomy: theoretically, Si2 could fly forever and is only limited by the pilot's sustainability.

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