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CUE: A network of organisations has been launched to help fund small companies in the developing world and particularly in Africa. The launch in London brought together thirty-five organisations with a total of seven-hundred-and-fifty million dollars in finance - most of which will be going to Africa. Martin Plaut was at the launch.)

One of the key problems for existing small businesses is that they find it impossible to get the credit they need to expand. These are not the smallest enterprises - the market trader or the business run by a husband and wife. These are businesses with between five and two-hundred-and-fifty employees, who have the capacity to grow. They could be a supermarket or a farmer's co-operative. Randall Kempner of the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs says his grouping can provide real opportunities for small business.

We will be the platform for our members to come together -- where our members can say " we provide technical assistance , and I also know the people that provide finance, I know the people that can help you with market access, I know the companies in the UK and the United States that might buy your products. So we're essentially saying there are members out there , but the time has come for us to work collectively, both to help each other do a better job and also to grow the small and growing business sector globally.

Research by the Aspen Network indicates that there is already four-billion dollars available for this sector. But this is scattered across the whole of the developing world. Adding to this total, and providing the necessary expertise is the stated aim of this new grouping.