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Cheesmond appointed new PhytoTrade Africa CEO

PhytoTrade Africa, the natural ingredients association from Southern Africa, today announced the appointment of John Cheesmond as its new CEO. Cheesmond will replace founding CEO, Gus Le Breton, who leaves after nine years to pursue new opportunities in the natural products sector.

Announcing the news, Anthea Stephens, Chair of the PhytoTrade Board, said "We are delighted to welcome John Cheesmond to the post of CEO. His extensive experience at the cutting edge of lifesciences innovation brings a new dimension to PhytoTrade Africa. As we embark on our next decade, we look forward to a significant expansion in the positive impacts of our work in Africa."

Cheesmond has wide experience as a senior executive, board member, deal maker and venture capitalist focussed on lifesciences, specialty chemicals and associated innovation-driven sectors. He has served on boards in Europe, the US and Asia; including Ciba Specialty Chemicals, Basel Switzerland, Hexcel Inc NYSE, Orchid Pharmaceuticals and Strides Arcolab, India, Cognis Germany and Inolex Inc USA. He was also a partner at Schroeder Venture Lifesciences and at Deloitte. He is an active member of The London Business School Alumnae Club, Swiss Alpine Club, Human Rights Watch and serves as a Governor of Aiglon College, Villars-sur-Ollon, Switzerland.

Speaking from the PhytoTrade Africa London office, Cyril Lombard, R&D Manager, said "Industry continuously requires new sources of biological resources for innovation, and there is now increased attention on Southern Africa as a source. To convert this interest into benefits, and to comply with the forthcoming Convention on Biodiversity regulations, will require a significant increase in R&D investment and a more focussed commercial strategy. John Cheesmond has the skills and experience to guide us through this and take us to the next level."

Outgoing CEO Gus Le Breton said, "I couldn't be happier. I feel enormous confidence that PhytoTrade will be in extremely capable hands. Our bottom line objective is to put more money into the hands of African producers. If we're to do this in a sustainable way, we need growth. I believe that John will deliver this growth."

John Cheesmond said, "I am delighted to join at this important time. There are significant opportunities for PhytoTrade to build on its extensive product pipeline and capitalise on the natural health and wellness megatrends. Gus and his team have done an outstanding job and I'm excited to work with the team to take PhytoTrade forward."

Cheesmond and Le Breton today begin a three month transitional phase, working together until August in order to ensure a smooth handover.

Note to Editors

PhytoTrade Africa is an association of natural ingredients producers in Southern Africa. In collaboration with commercial partners from around the world, it seeks to develop the natural products sector to meet the twin objectives of poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

www.phytotradeafrica.com

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