



## **New foundation seed company for SSA begins operations**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NAIROBI: Thursday, 15 June 2017** - The new foundation seed company to support small and medium sized seed companies in production and maintenance of quality foundation seed has begun operations in Nairobi with the appointment of a seasoned agriculturalist with extensive commercial experience in business management to spearhead its operations as managing director.

Andy Watt, a former head of Syngenta East and Southern Africa, who was until recently a consultant at Kibeni Agriculture Ltd has been appointed to the role.

Andy expressed confidence in the new task saying his first order of business will be to build an interdependent relationship with seed companies as its customers and nurture trust and confidence.

Andy's appointment was announced during the inaugural board meeting held in Nairobi 12-13 June 2017. The company's board is chaired by Mclean Sibanda of the Innovation Hub, South Africa. Mclean has wide experience in startups, intellectual property policy and management, technology transfer and commercialization of intellectual property. He is also a member of the board of trustees of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF).

Other members of the board include Tim Johnson-President, Illinois Foundation Seed Inc, Dr. Mick Mwala, Director, Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center, University of Zambia; Lauren Good, seed system lead at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and Donald Mavindidze and Caroline Muchiri of AATF.

QualiBasic Seed Company is a fully-fledged commercial venture that is being incubated by AATF. It was initiated in December 2016 with initial funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to address the difficulty of access to quality foundation seed by most seed companies.

Denis Kyetere, Executive Director at AATF said he is excited that Andy is finally on board after the long search. “We expect him to put up the right structures in place and get the company running to accomplish the need it was set out for,” he added.

The entity is based in Nairobi, Kenya and will set up initial operations in Kenya, Zambia and South Africa before expanding to other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

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