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Food Security Issues & Innovations on the Table at September Urban Agri Summit in Johannesburg

Johannesburg, South Africa (10 August 2017) - Africa's increasing concerns for food security to feed its growing populations and sustain economic development are to be tackled head-on by the region's foremost experts, regulatory authorities and various agriculture industry stakeholders at the Urban Agri Summit 2017 happening on September 7-8 in Johannesburg.

Several agri-sector leaders herald emerging innovative solutions such as vertical farming to address the continent's increasing need for an adequate and sustainable food supply.

"Vertical Farming will inevitably be Africa's future pathway to food security and environmental sustainability," said Aliyu Abdulhameed, *Managing Director* for the **Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL)**. *"NIRSAL's participation in Urban Agri Summit 2017 will open new frontiers to better address the multidimensional needs of agricultural value chains in competitive urban agribusiness and food industry."*

Prof Michael Rudolph, *Director* of the **Siyakhana Multipurpose Cooperative**, explained: *"Vertical farming is becoming an important intervention for African cities as an innovative solution to supplying food, mitigating against air and noise pollution, applying water and energy conservation and combating urban food insecurity. Vertical farming will offer inner city children, youth and adults a chance to reconnect with nature and promote better environment health in the city. The Urban Agri Summit could not have come at a better time for Johannesburg as the city looks for innovative effective and efficient ways for addressing food and nutrition security as well as an environmentally healthy place to live. I look forward to robust discussions and networking with a wide range of key stakeholders during the Summit."*

Mlibo Bantwini, *Executive* of the **Dube AgriZone**, added: *"The agribusiness sector in Africa has tremendous potential to contribute to economic development and assist in ensuring food security. The use of methods such as vertical farming complemented with other methods of production can play a vital role in ensuring that this potential is fulfilled. We are excited to be part of the Summit. As this will be our first participation at the Summit, we hope to interact with many stakeholders and learn from their insights and build relationships with industry players."*

Various initiatives have already been undertaken by South Africa to spur innovation in its agriculture sector. Together with other Sub-Saharan African cities in Nigeria and Kenya, South African metropolises are joining the footsteps of many global cities to introduce sustainable urban indoor farming. A key to sustainability, however, requires farms streamlining operations and reducing resource wastage.

"Food-producing agriculture value chains must undergo innovation to increase efficiency and yields, enhance variety, and meet the dietary demands of the growing population worldwide. To do so sustainably they must reduce waste and pollution, better manage and conserve water resources, and must be powered by renewable energy and energy efficient systems." said Nicole Algio, *Regional Secretariat Manager* for **REEEP Clean Energy**. She added: *"REEEP as an endorsing partner to the Urban Agri Summit 2017, has a deep understanding of specialized research and analysis into the water-energy-food nexus and agrifood value chains globally, and supports climate smart innovation in agriculture such as vertical farming that applies the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce overall energy consumption of fossil fuels."*

Angel Adelaja, *Founder/CEO* of **Fresh Direct Produce & Agro-Allied Services**, takes a fresh approach: *"What if Africa no longer needed to import most of its food products, and agricultural value chains were strengthened, profitable, and were able to meet local demands for food without being environmentally taxing? This is my goal for my company Fresh Direct Nigeria and for African Agriculture. With increased urbanization, we need to secure our food systems not only rural agriculture, but with a complement of urban agriculture through technology and community. I'm excited that the Urban Agri Summit will be a gateway to unlock Africa's potentials through outside the box thinking."*

Urban Agri Summit 2017's is partnered by Gold Sponsor **Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL)**, and is supported by the **Association for Vertical Farming (AVF)** and by the **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)**.

The two-day Summit will be held at the Sunnyside Park Hotel in Parktown, Johannesburg. For more details, contact Jose at +65 6846 2366 or email jose@magenta-global.com.sg.

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About the **Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL)** - *Gold Sponsor*

NIRSAL Plc (Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending) is the primary platform for managing agribusiness risk in Nigeria. Incorporated in 2013, NIRSAL is a \$0.5bn (\$500 million) Public-Private Corporation wholly-owned by the Central Bank of Nigeria. It is designed to appropriately define, price and share agribusiness-related credit risk. It is an initiative of Central Bank of Nigeria, the Bankers Committee and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development. NIRSAL mobilises financing for Nigeria agribusiness by using credit guarantees to address the risk of default. It is a flexible financing tool designed to change the behaviour of financial institutions. The NIRSAL facility covers all crops and livestock activity in Nigeria while driving improved investment outcomes and job creation. Through its interventions, NIRSAL: reduces the cost of borrowing by agriculture value chain players; enhances food security; facilitates higher productivity; generates higher income, GDP and foreign exchange earnings; and fundamentally transforms the Nigerian economy with agriculture playing a stronger role in line with the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) of the Buhari administration. From 2013 to date, NIRSAL has guaranteed projects in the agricultural value chain worth N65.53 billion.



About the **Association of Vertical Farming** - *Supporting Organisation*

The Association for Vertical Farming (AVF) is an internationally active non-profit organization of individuals, companies, research institutions and universities focusing on advancing Vertical Farming technologies, designs and businesses. The vision of the AVF is to lead the Vertical Farming movement to facilitate healthy food, green jobs, environmental protection and climate change resilience globally. The AVF offers news from the vertical farming industry, tools and resources, awards and workshops, annual summits, exchange of know-how and technology as well as facilitating synergies and potential partnerships. www.vertical-farming.net.



About the **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)** - *Supporting Organisation*

REEEP invests in clean energy markets in developing countries to reduce CO2 emissions and build prosperity. Leveraging a strategic portfolio of high impact projects, REEEP creates, adapts and shares knowledge to build sustainable markets for renewable energy and energy efficient solutions; advance energy access, improve lives and economic opportunities; and reduce climate and environmental damage.