

Media Release

Giving For Hope Foundation to save over 10 600 jobs through SMME loans

30 April 2020. The Giving For Hope Foundation (GFHF) is currently reviewing 844 applications for loans worth R420-million and is looking to significantly grow its loan-based lifeline for struggling Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). This is expected to save about 10 652 jobs as per the latest applications received. Since the launch new funders have come on board with the GFHF, some of the funders being 27Four Investment Managers Firm & Kamdar Group Property Investment and Development company.

Mr Mahomed Zubeir Moosa, chief executive officer of Willowton Group and founder of the GFHF, applauded government's planned R500-billion intervention as it sought to delay the onset of the Corona pandemic in South Africa and save as many lives as possible whilst also trying to alleviate the hunger and job losses that were an inevitable result.

"But, we cannot leave it up to government to put in place all the contingency measures. As big businesses within the South African economy, we all have to do our bit. Statistics SA estimates that more than 42% of our small to medium businesses face closure. With that comes an exponential increase in joblessness in a country that was already battling high unemployment. Our role is to try to give hope because, it is only through saving some of our businesses, that we can continue to feed our people and rescue our economy," he said.

The GFHF, which was officially launched on April 8 by the Willowton Group, Albaraka Bank and the South African Muslim Charitable Trust to offer loans to struggling SMMEs, started with a seed capital of R100-million and has received its official trust registration.

Ambassador, Phumzile Langeni, "the establishment of the Giving For Hope Foundation, is not only a response to the President's clarion call for South Africans to support their fellow countrymen and women and businesses during this unprecedented time. The uniqueness of the GFHF funding support model is how it is structured to respond to the liquidity and capital challenges that small, micro and medium enterprises will experience as a result of the devastating impact of COVID-19. I salute the foresight of the founder of this initiative, Zubeir Moosa, as it will provide much needed financial assistance to a sector struggling with access to funds and in dire need of support. I'm also heartened by the direct impact that the Fund will have on job preservation at this crucial time."

Suzanne Ackerman-Berman, transformation director at Pick n Pay, is also an ambassador and is in strong support of the foundation's mission to give small business owners access to a lifeline. "This is a trying time for all businesses, and especially small business. These enterprises create thousands of jobs in South Africa. The Giving For Hope Foundation will help provide crucial funding to them so that they can keep their people employed and continue contributing to the economy."

Fatima Vawda, Funder & Ambassador commented, "Our future wellbeing depends on our collective actions now. We must focus on livelihoods and lives to ensure a future with great social cohesion and inclusive economic growth. The fund presents a unique opportunity for big business and individuals to demonstrate our national characteristics of unity and ubuntu and make a pledge."

The GFHF goal is to raise R500 million in available funding.

Mr Shabir Chohan said that as the loan applications were processed, there would be a direct link between the size of each loan, the circumstances in which each applicant found itself and the number of employees that relied on each company. Through providing loans, the GFHF is trying to ensure that applicants will not retrench workers.

“As one of the main reasons for the establishment of the GFHF is job preservation, there will be a direct link between the quantum of loans and the number of people employed by potential clients. We need to keep people in their jobs and encourage businesses to not retrench. Only then can we look forward to economic recovery,” he pointed out.

Applications, which are open to all SMME's irrespective of sector, race, gender or religion, are still coming in via the fund's website (www.givingforhope.co.za), chief executive of Durban-based Al Baraka Bank which will be administering the trust and loans, Mr Shabir Chohan, confirmed. The loans will be extended on an interest-free, profit free and admin-cost free basis and only need to be paid back in 12 instalments from April 2021.

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ABOUT WILLOWTON GROUP

Willowton Group has been in operation since 1970 and has grown to become one of Africa's leading edible oil processors, as well as one of the leading agro-processors in the African FMCG market.

The group operates across South Africa with manufacturing facilities in Pietermaritzburg, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Willowton Group has recently completed expanding its manufacturing operations into Zambia and Zimbabwe, with aspirations to further extend its reach to customers throughout Africa.

A wide range of products encompasses edible oils, rice, sugar, margarines and spreads, beauty, toilet and laundry soaps, candles, baking and industrial fats, often distributed through its subsidiary Willowton Logistics. The Group has recently entered the milling industry with the launch of D'lite Super Maize meal within Southern Africa. Well-known brands include, among others, Sunfoil, Sunshine D, D'lite, Daily, Sona, Eve, Crown, WoodenSpoon, and Allsome rice.

By combining flexibility and vision with a sound business approach, the company is set to strengthen its position in the FMCG market even further, now and into the future.

ABOUT AL BARAKA BANK

Al Baraka Bank was established in South Africa in 1989 and is geared to offer communities country-wide a practical and sustainable alternative to conventional banking.

Our Shariah-compliant products and services appeal to both Muslim and non-Muslim clients. Employing a faith-based system of financial management, our guiding principles are drawn from Shariah, upholding the ideal of profit-sharing, while prohibiting the payment or receiving of interest in any transaction.

With its head office in Durban, we enjoy a national business footprint and, as a commercial and fully-fledged Islamic bank, we offer clients a wide range of financial products and services.

Al Baraka Bank's board of directors comprises international and local business people, all with the requisite business skills, coupled with an exceptional collective knowledge of and expertise and experience in Islamic banking.

Al Baraka Banking Group (ABG), of which Al Baraka Bank in South Africa is a subsidiary, has progressively increased its shareholding in our financial institution, ensuring that the local business unit has grown to become an integral part of the international group. ABG is based in Bahrain and has a presence in 17 countries. In line with this, the bank has developed and honed an enviable standing in South Africa's financial sector as a financial



services provider of high repute; one which demonstrates the professionalism, effectiveness and efficiency necessary to function at the leading-edge of Islamic banking in this country.

ABOUT SHARIAH COMPLIANCE

The difference between Shariah compliant and conventional banks is that conventional banks take deposits and advance funds on interest. In contrast, Shariah compliant banks take deposits and advance funds on a profit and loss sharing basis. In addition Shariah banks do not deal with entities engaged in activities that are detrimental to the socio-economic wellbeing of society.

This information has been prepared for Willowton Group and Al Baraka Bank

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