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## Inaugural AGCO Agriculture Foundation Award presented for innovative solution to rural community unemployment in South Africa

DULUTH, GA

The AGCO Agriculture Foundation (AAF), a private entity with the strong commitment to providing a holistic approach to the global prevention and relief of hunger through impactful initiatives and sustainable agricultural development, today announced the Bahle Zondo Foundation in South Africa as the first organization globally to receive the newly-launched AAF Award. The AAF Award goes to the Bahle Zondo Foundation (BZF) for its innovative solutions in addressing rural unemployment through its work at the uMsinga Farming Project in KwaZulu-Natal.

Philanthropist Dr Bahle Zondo established the uMsinga Farming project in August 2018 with a clear objective: to create job opportunities for local women, provide them with the chance to become successful agripreneurs and empower them with the means to sustain themselves and their families. Just one year later, the project provides employment for some 50 women who run and manage the farm. Recently the uMsinga Farming Project harvested its first crop - sugar beans. The BZF assisted the local women in finding a market for their produce and with the sales' income, the women are now better able to support their households as well as invest in further inputs for the next planting season.

"We are thrilled to present our first AAF Award to the Bahle Zondo Foundation and highlight its impressive work in creating the uMsinga Farming Project," says Metti Richenhagen, Managing Director, AGCO Agriculture Foundation. "The award recognizes the BZF's work in solving challenges in the community. The highly impactful initiative is going to elevate this rural community while approaching economic growth and food security through sustainable agricultural development."

As the winner of the award, the BZF will receive US Dollars 50,000 towards further community development projects.

Initiated by AGCO Corporation (NYSE: AGCO), a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of agricultural machinery and solutions, the AGCO Agriculture Foundation started its non-profit activities in 2018 and contributes to specific [Sustainable Development Goals](#) developed by the United Nations that seek to end hunger and provide basic necessities to a growing world population.

With a seed fund of US Dollars 78,000, Dr Zondo was inspired to create the uMsinga Farming Project following a protest by women outside the local primary school in Msinga. The women were appealing for more job opportunities with the school's feeding scheme but it was not possible for the school to employ them. Dr Zondo came up with his alternative solution to utilize their skills by establishing the farming project and merging three informal cooperatives on communal land with sites varying from 2-50 hectares (5-123 acres).

The BZF's objective is for the women to become self-sufficient but, in the meantime, it has set aside a budget to pay them a stipend until the farm generates enough income to provide wages. Currently the BZF supports women of the co-operatives as well as casual workers who assist with clearing weeds and trees and erecting fencing around the project's cultivated land. This stipend has served as an incentive to attract local youth to the project.

"The BZF is doing fantastic work in fostering and uplifting the emerging farming sector in this locality and is led by Dr Zondo who truly knows his community's development needs," adds Metti Richenhagen. "The project is having a positive direct social, economic and environmental impact on its community and is a fine example of the initiatives the AAF is looking to support."

The AAF Award was presented to Dr Zondo by Metti Richenhagen at the BZF's 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary celebration on 17 August, at uMsinga, KwaZulu-Natal. Joining the celebration was Mrs. Bongzi Sithole-Moloi, Member of the Executive Committee of the KwaZulu-Natal Agriculture & Rural Development Department and Nuradin Osman, AGCO Vice President & General Manager, Africa.

About the AGCO Agriculture Foundation (AAF)

The AGCO Agriculture Foundation (AAF), initiated by AGCO Corporation (NYSE: AGCO) in 2018, is a private non-profit organization with the vision to prevent and alleviate hunger through a holistic approach. AAF is domiciled in Vaduz, Liechtenstein and operations are managed from Duluth, Georgia, USA. For more information, please visit <https://www.agcocorp.com/commitment/sustainability/focus-areas/communities.html>.

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