MEDIA RELEASE FROM GROWTHPOINT PROPERTIES

***Growthpoint increases its humanitarian support during the COVID-19 lockdown***

**Johannesburg, 19 May 2020** - Growthpoint Properties Group Chief Executive Officer, South Africa Chief Executive Officer and Group Financial Director have all personally pledged one-third of their salaries for three months to the Solidarity Fund to assist in curbing the CO VID-19 pandemic in South Africa.

The Chairman of Growthpoint and several non-executive directors are also donating a third of their quarterly board meeting fees to the Solidarity Fund.

The pledge responds to President Cyril Ramaphosa’s appeal to the country to donate to the Solidarity Fund and the JSE’s appeal for listed companies to heed the call.

Norbert Sasse, Group CEO of Growthpoint, says, “At this definitive moment in South Africa’s history, we are committed to supporting the national efforts to limit the impacts of COVID-19. The Solidarity Fund is a powerful example of the generosity, compassion and patriotism shown by South Africans in this time of crisis. I am incredibly proud that everyone at Growthpoint has stepped up at this truly ‘*Thuma Mina’* moment.”

The Solidarity Fund is an independently administered vehicle to help government and civil society to fund the response to the COVID-19 crisis in South Africa. It is a consolidated effort to detect and prevent the spread of the coronavirus, care for those in hospital or medical care by ensuring a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and feeding and sheltering those who have been left vulnerable by the pandemic.

The Solidarity Fund contributions are not where Growthpoint’s efforts stop. Their corporate response to supporting those who are severely affected by the Covid-19 lockdown put R200 million in rental back into the pockets of profoundly impacted businesses in April and May to sustain them through the lockdown. This number includes 1,494 small and micro retailers. The rental relief has directly protected the jobs of those working for recipients.

All Growthpoint suppliers also continue to be paid in full, regardless of the capacity of their service, to ensure that they can pay their staff.

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus within Growthpoint’s operations, it has imposed strict measures to protect its employees. It has invested extensively in safety and sanitation at its many properties, including shopping centres across the country which support essential retail, to safeguard the well-being of millions of South Africans.

“The pandemic has had a significant impact on all sectors of society, including the property sector,” says Sasse. “Never before has it been more important for all South Africans to stand together and each do our part in the fight to limit the impacts of COVID-19. We believe it is imperative to sustain lives, jobs, communities and businesses so that we can emerge to rebuild our nation and economy.”

Growthpoint also continues to support its corporate social responsibility (CSR) partners, most focused on education in previously disadvantaged communities countrywide, to ensure that these charities and initiatives can rise to the new challenges they face. Where some of their operations are proving to be impossible, Growthpoint is supporting the diversion of finances into technology that enables video streaming, WhatsApp conversations and information sharing, to support these organisations to achieve their ongoing objectives in new ways.

Growthpoint’s CSR during the lockdown includes:

* **CHRISTEL HOUSE:** Using a life-transforming educational model, Christel House educates, feeds and provides health care for disadvantage children from early childhood through to early adulthood. The 30 students supported by Growthpoint started Christel House’s remote learning curriculum on 1 April. All high school students now have tablets loaded with a SIM card and are receiving weekly data bundles to allow for online video streaming sessions. Learners were given food and sanitary hampers on their last day. More are being delivered at month-end using the school’s buses. Counsellors and social workers continue to counsel students and families telephonically. While persisting through the crisis, Christel House is breaking ground for new and innovative ways of educating and supporting students in future.
* **PROTEC:** This programme assists to prepare school learners for Maths, Science and Technology and Engineering (STEM) careers. The 40 learners supported by Growthpoint with maths and science tutoring sessions usually held every Saturday and during holidays have been given worksheets via WhatsApp and email, where they also receive tutor assistance, to keep up with the education plan.
* **EDUCATION AFRICA:** Dedicated to poverty alleviation through education, several of its initiatives have been able to continue throughout the lockdown, such as its UNISA programme in Business Focus Management, which is run on an ICT platform with added support for students on Zoom and WhatsApp. Growthpoint provides Education Africa with offices.
* **BOTSHABELO:** Botshabelo helps orphaned children, underprivileged pre-schoolers and women through their children’s homes, preschools and teacher training centres. Teachers have been provided with training modules which they can work on and are still receiving their stipends to assist them in providing for their families. They have also been given access to technology for WhatsApp and online meetings to check on learner progress and engage.
* **NTATAISE LOWVELD NPC:** Ntataise teaches and supports ECD practitioners to stimulate rural and underprivileged children. Stipends for the practitioners who are being trained are diligently being paid during the lockdown, and they have been connected with WhatsApp to communicate.
* **GENISIS SAFE PLACE:** The ongoing support for this safe place for victims of injustice, abuse and violence has kept its doors open at this time of real need. The NPO has also started providing water in rural/informal settlements and delivering food parcels to households living below the breadline such as child-headed homes.
* **RISE AGAINST HUNGER:** Since 23 March, Rise Against Hunger has distributed over 650 000 meals. It is also preparing for an increase in demand for meals once schools and universities return. Ensuring more people can earn during the lockdown while helping to feed the hungry, Growthpoint employed casual workers to safely pack meal parcels for Rise Against Hunger in two warehouses, in Joburg and Cape Town. Besides being paid fair wages, the casual employees receive a meal on the days they work.
* **PROPERTY POINT**: With 250 SMME businesses in Growthpoint’s enterprise development network, Property Point has stepped up to advocate for entrepreneurs to garner urgent support, as well as to continue to inform, equip and inspire small businesses throughout this time. It engaged these businesses before the lockdown and identified their pressing needs. Programme managers, who manage relationships with the beneficiaries, are continually engaging the businesses with regular check-ins, sharing information on how to apply to the various relief funds, facilitating legal consultations to navigate contractual issues, offering individual coaching sessions, and providing a promotional platform with Entrepreneurship To The Point, eTTP #InConversation sessions via Zoom. Property Point is tirelessly working to ensure that the businesses on the programme are well taken care of, and that we walk alongside them into this unknown.

Growthpoint creates space to thrive with innovative and sustainable property solutions. It is South Africa’s largest primary JSE-listed REIT and is invested in real estate and communities across three continents including Africa, Europe and Australia.

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