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NEWS RELEASE

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS EXPAND INTO NIGERIA

Two professional services firms in the South African financial services sector have joined forces to enter the Nigerian market.

Novare Group, an asset consulting and investment firm, together with Genesis Actuarial Solutions, an actuarial services company, have combined their resources and skills to enter the Nigerian market trading as Novare Actuaries. They follow in the wake of successful ventures in Nigeria by companies like MTN, Metropolitan Life, Shoprite and Standard Bank and have set up an office in Lagos to provide specialist actuarial services to Nigerian companies.

South Africa is currently considering wide ranging reforms to its pension and social security environment. Nigeria went through this process a number of years ago and in 2004 promulgated its Pensions Reform Act, which led to a new dispensation for pension funds. The Nigerian insurance market is also expanding rapidly as financial services infrastructure develops, and it was this environment that led to Novare and Genesis combining to explore opportunities.

Novare Actuaries' Managing Director, Tommie Doubell, said: "We are excited about our involvement in the Nigerian market. Even though Novare has operated internationally, this is the first time that we have established an office and a full subsidiary outside of South Africa. We are partnering with some exceptional local investors and look forward to contributing to the exciting growth of the Nigerian economy."

Actuaries use their skills to assess risk and to formulate policies that minimise the cost of risk. Nigeria, with a population of almost 150 million people, has only two practicing actuaries compared with around 600 qualified actuaries in South Africa.

Novare Actuaries plans to use its skilled actuaries in South Africa to provide the bulk of the actuarial services. An investment will also be made in the education and training of Nigerian actuarial students to transfer skills and expertise.

The Chairman of the company, Chief Orlando O Ojo, previously Managing Director of Shell Gas in Nigeria, commented that he was excited by the co-operation between Nigeria and South Africa: "On the one hand we have the large and strong market – many people, lots of energy and potential, but hampered by a lack of certain skills. On the other hand we have the more developed South African market – also African in that it understands uniquely African challenges and opportunities, but with skills and experience to offer.

"The combination of these two can be a powerful force working in our favour to achieve the growth and development which we are seeking in Nigeria."

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