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PRESS RELEASE: NATIONAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE (NBI) ANNOUNCES NEW CEO, SHAMEELA SOOBRAMONEY

The National Business Initiative (NBI) is delighted to announce Shameela Soobramoney as the organisation's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Shameela joins us from the JSE where she has been the Chief Sustainability Officer, commencing her duties as NBI CEO on 11 April 2023. The NBI as an independent and voluntary business organisation driven by the common purpose of creating a thriving society and country in South Africa, through the collective action of business in society, working with all key stakeholders. This mandate has never been more important, nor more pressing, in light of the current socio-economic and sustainability issues that we are facing as a country.

Shameela was selected as the ideal candidate to lead the NBI in expanding this important work, given her well established capabilities as both a corporate strategist and sustainability expert. She is particularly passionate about the systemic and integrated importance of sustainability thinking in corporate strategy. In addition to being the JSE's Chief Sustainability Officer and previously it's group strategist, she has held senior positions in banking and in insurance, has chaired the Sustainability Working Group of the World Federation of Exchanges, and until her departure from the JSE was a member of the Strategy Group of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance (GISD) and a member of the Sustainable Finance Working Group of the Climate Risk Forum (chaired by National Treasury). She is a member of the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) Commissioners' Climate Finance Advisory Group, the BRICS Financial Sector Working Group, a non-executive director of the WWF South Africa, and of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA). She is the winner of the SERAS Africa CSR/Sustainability Professional 2021 and the IRMSA ESG Sustainability Professional 2020 awards.

The Chairperson of the NBI Board, Cas Coovadia, emphasised Shameela's key qualities that led to her being selected as the NBI's new CEO: "Shameela is an indomitable leader, who is ready and committed to lead the NBI in this exciting new chapter in her career. Her combination of integrated strategy and sustainability knowledge, track record of delivery on notable local and global projects, extensive business experience through her various leadership roles, as well as crucial insights and understandings of the NBI's key work areas, make her the ideal choice for the role."

As a coalition of close to a hundred South African and multi-national member companies, the NBI effects change in the key cross-cutting and multi-dimensional areas of Economic Inclusion, Social Transformation, Environmental Sustainability and Institutional Capacity Building. Shameela's network and prior experience is a fabulous launch pad for taking these initiatives to the next level. In addition to her many accolades, she is also a member of the Institute of Directors of Southern Africa, has served on the Integrated Reporting Committee of SA Working Group, the Code for Responsible Investing South Africa committee, the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative's member group, and the African Securities Exchanges Association sustainability group, amongst others. Shameela is furthermore strategically positioned to build the NBI's presence with international organisations through her business networks. She is a respected speaker at local and global events and a regular contributor to media articles. This will be a crucial value-add to NBI's local and international partners, members and stakeholders in the environmental sustainability and socio-economic development space.

Shameela is particularly excited about the contribution she can make, stating: “I consider it a privilege to be entrusted by the Board and the leadership team to lead the NBI in the vital work that it does leveraging the might of our members and partners to influence systemic change in helping “build tomorrow now” at what is one of the most critical junctures in our country’s history. We are in a period of rapid change and one where the importance of the sustainability agenda, out of necessity, has to be integrated into business models at an exponential rate. The passion and skill of the NBI team is well known and respected and I would also like to thank former CEO Joanne Yawitch for her inspiring leadership during her tenure. I look forward to supporting the team and working with our stakeholders to ensure that we can deliver on our mandate and continue to drive thought leadership and collaborative action.”

With the passion, critical thinking, confidence and the knowledge of pertinent issues, the NBI is in both very dynamic and sturdy hands. Welcome Shameela, we are delighted to have you as our new leader and we cannot wait to get down to work.

We also take this opportunity to wish Joanne Yawitch, the NBI CEO until the end of 2022, all the best in her future opportunities. Joanne was at the helm of the NBI for 11 years and played a critical role in leading the organisation and positioning it as the credible voice of sustainability in business.

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Notes to editors:

We are an independent business movement with over 95 South African and multi-national member companies committed to the vision of a thriving country and society.

The NBI was launched in March 1995 by the then President, Nelson Mandela as a voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses.

Today, our membership includes a significant proportion of the country’s leading listed companies, a number of major state-owned enterprises and a variety of medium-sized firms. The NBI is a Level 1 Contributor to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment(B-BBEE) and is a Public Benefit organisation.

The NBI is for the committed, building South Africa’s tomorrow now.