

Bidvest Group**Media Release****29 April 2020**

Bidvest announces raft of measures to mitigate impact of Covid-19 lockdown*R400 million relief fund set up to support employees income needs*

Johannesburg, South Africa, May 2020: Services, trading and distribution group, Bidvest, has announced a raft of measures to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on its staff.

The JSE-listed group, which employs 100 000 people in South Africa, has allocated R400 million towards employee relief initiatives through a newly formed Bidvest Group Covid-19 Employee Fund. This will be used to support the income needs of staff who have been unable to work during the Level 5 lockdown and who will still not be able to work when the lockdown is downgraded to Level 4. Executives will also be taking a 40% pay cut and Board members will be taking a 30% pay cut.

“Like the rest of the world, South Africa is going through an unprecedented crisis,” says Group CEO, Lindsay Ralphs, “and even diversified groups like ours are not immune to the economic fallout. As one of the largest employers on the JSE Top 40 index, we nevertheless recognise that our people are our most valuable asset and are making financial arrangements that will help us shield them against the impact of the crisis. The management team has further committed to doing all in its power to ensure that we pay over income benefits to our employees as quickly as possible so as to limit unnecessary suffering during this time”

Employees who have been able to work during the lockdown period will receive their salaries in accordance with standard business practices as the country moves from Level 5 to Level 4.

The categories of staff who have been unable to work during the lockdown and who may still not be able to work when regulations ease on 1 May, will be supported through the fund. These include job grades from general workers through to supervisors and managers. These employees will each receive an ex-gratia payment of R2 000 from the Group Covid-19 Employee Fund to assist them with immediate needs and to supplement any UIF TERS allowance being offered by government. This



funding mechanism will ensure that the most vulnerable employees receive as close as possible to their full salary during this difficult time.

In addition, the Group Board and Exco have agreed to establish similar funds at divisional and subsidiary level, which will be used to meet the humanitarian needs of staff in those areas of the business. This is intended to ease the transition between the various lockdown phases as some group companies will be able to return to partial operations as from 1 May, while others will not.

“We care about our people and their wellbeing and are making every attempt to soften the blow of the Covid-19 lockdown,” says Ralphs. “Similarly, we will be taking every precaution to ensure that the group and its individual companies continue to be viable and sustainable so that we can continue to serve our economy, country and people.”

End.

Issued by Ogilvy Public Relations on behalf of Bidvest Group, Lindsay Ralphs, Group CEO and Mpumi Madisa, CEO Designate.