FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Nancy Baker, Communications Director, INMED HQ: +1 540-533-7490, nbaker@inmed.org
Unathi Sihlahla, INMED Program Director-Health in Action South Africa: +27 72-687-8548
usihlahla@inmed.org

Sterling, VA-based INMED Partnerships for Children Launches Latest Aquaponics Project in South Africa

PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA (March 9, 2017): INMED Partnerships for Children and INMED South Africa (INMED) today launched their latest commercial aquaponics facility at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth. In partnership with the Mondelēz International Foundation (MIF) and Mondelēz South Africa, this project will provide children from primary schools in low-income communities of Port Elizabeth with access to fresh, nutritious produce and fish. A second aquaponic system will serve primary schools in the Soweto area, with construction scheduled to commence later this year.

INMED has been working in South Africa for more than 10 years, where it has pioneered aquaponics production to promote better nutrition and income generation. Today's project launch is part of INMED's Health in Action program, a primary school-based wellness initiative launched in 2015 funded by MIF. It aims to nurture a sustainable, healthy lifestyle culture in schools and communities to help build a healthier future for South Africa's children. INMED also works with MIF to implement the award-winning Health in Action program in Brazil.

"In South Africa, Health in Action reaches more than 100 000 primary school children annually in 116 schools in 13 at-risk communities in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape," said Unathi

Sihlahla, Program Director of INMED South Africa. “Its three main goals are to ensure school children from disadvantaged communities have access to nutritious food, get enough physical exercise and learn about nutrition through the national school curriculum.”

Aquaponics is an innovative food production technique that combines aquaculture (fish farming) with hydroponics (soilless crop production with the cultivation of plants in water). “Daily consumption of fresh produce is widely acknowledged as key to a well-balanced diet, yet for many in low-income communities, healthy food choices are often out of reach,” said Joost Vlaanderen, Mondelēz South Africa’s Managing Director. “The aquaponic facilities are an attempt to address this challenge.”

In an aquaponic system, water from the fish tanks is enriched with nitrates from fish excretions. The water is then fed into the grow beds, where the nitrates are absorbed by the plants as nutrient-rich food without the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This action filters and circulates clean water back into the fish tanks. As a result, aquaponics utilizes about 90% less water and yields up to 10 times more crops than traditional farming methods.

The Port Elizabeth aquaponic system is expected to produce approximately 28 tons of various greens, 4.4 tons of tomatoes and approximately 2.1 tons of fish annually to supplement the nutritional needs of children at various schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area. The aquaponic system also will provide research opportunities for agricultural students from NMMU, who are studying the importance of adopting sustainable food production practices that conserve natural resources at a time when drought has been threatening the water supply and food security in the Nelson Mandela Bay region.

“INMED is proud to partner with the Mondelēz International Foundation to improve the nutrition and wellbeing of South African children and their communities,” noted Linda Pfeiffer, President and CEO of INMED Partnerships for Children. “Through our work with the Foundation in Brazil, we’ve seen dramatic improvements in children’s body mass index, and we are working diligently to achieve the same results through collaborative partnerships with school administrators, local governments, non-governmental organizations and communities in South Africa.”

About INMED Partnerships for Children/INMED South Africa

INMED Partnerships for Children is a non-profit international development organisation that has worked in more than 100 countries to create pathways for disadvantaged children and families to achieve well-being and self-reliance. Through multi-sector partnerships, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty and generate opportunities for success. INMED’s programmes in climate-smart agriculture/aquaponics, maternal and child health and income generation have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986. Learn more at https://inmed.org and https://inmed.org.za.

About Mondelēz International Foundation

The Mondelēz International Foundation (MIF) is the charitable arm of global food and beverage conglomerate Mondelēz International. Via international partnerships with leading NGOs, MIF funds nutrition education, active play and fresh foods programs to empower more than one million children and their families around the world to lead healthier lives. For information, visit http://www.mondelezinternational.com/well-being/community-partnerships/our-programs-and-partners.

Photo Captions:

1. Representatives of Mondelēz International Foundation, INMED and NMMU plant seeds in the new aquaponic unit, along with primary school children from a nearby disadvantaged community that will benefit from the project.

2. Students and their principal from a beneficiary school sample the types of produce they'll soon harvest from the INMED aquaponic system at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

3. Joost Vlaanderen of Mondelēz South Africa and Prof. Leitch, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, help local school children unveil signage for the new aquaponic system at the university in Port Elizabeth.

-30-