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Novartis introduces pioneering equal parental leave policy in South Africa

- **Novartis parents to enjoy equal parental leave benefits regardless of gender**

Johannesburg, South Africa – 1 July 2019: Novartis South Africa today became one of the first countries that launched its global equal parental leave policy as part of its commitment to celebrating the life-changing importance of becoming a parent.

The ground-breaking move will give all new parents paid parental leave of a minimum of 14 weeks (three and a-half months) following the birth, surrogacy or adoption of a child. “The policy serves as a symbol of equality for all new parents in Novartis, allowing our people to revel in one of life’s most special events and spend time bonding with their new babies and families.

“Essentially, this means giving new Novartis parents the means to help them enjoy greater flexibility and financial stability during one of the most important time of their lives,” says Mo Kadwa, CEO at Novartis South Africa.

Egypt, Germany, India, Mexico and Switzerland join South Africa as the countries that the policy has been introduced in as part of Phase I, while Phases II and III of the equal parental leave policy will be rolled out in additional Novartis markets from January 2020 and 2021 respectively

According to the Labour Relations and Labour Amendment Act of South Africa that was signed into law in November 2018, working South African new dads became entitled to 10 days of paternity leave after the birth of their children. The Act also includes provision for 10 weeks of parental adoption leave if the child is aged below two but applies to one parent only, surrogacy leave as well as an increase in UIF and maternity benefits.

“As a multinational organisation, Novartis always strives to meet or exceed statutory requirements in the countries that we operate in. In this instance we realized that extending the parental leave policy to all parents, regardless of gender or whether they gave birth to

their baby or not, will drive our focus on diversity and inclusion that is so important to us at Novartis. This is set to add more value to Novartis families as both parents will have the priceless opportunity to bond with their children in these early formative months.

This policy also strives to make our workplace more inclusive by supporting our employees through the different stages of their lives and empowering them to make the best choices for the health and well-being of their families,” concludes Kadwa.

ENDS

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