

2 November 2020

Camellia Plc
Governance changes

Following allegations of serious human rights abuses at Kakuzi Plc in Kenya, Camellia has been reviewing its governance and safeguarding oversight arrangements and is setting up a Safeguarding and Stewardship Committee of Camellia's Board of Directors.

Camellia is also pushing the Boards of the companies we invest in to look at their own procedures, and where necessary make operational changes.

Camellia welcomes the news that Kakuzi has taken further steps to upgrade its governance and safeguarding measures. Details are set out in Kakuzi's announcement which is reproduced below. They include establishing an Independent Human Rights Advisory Committee and setting up an Operational-level Grievance Mechanism in line with UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

These are important steps forward so that local communities, Kakuzi, and all those who depend upon it for their livelihoods can thrive together in the years to come.

Camellia will continue to do all it can to ensure that companies it invests in operate to the highest standards of governance.

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KAKUZI PLC

Board changes, establishment of Independent Human Rights Advisory Committee to the Board and of an Operational-level Grievance Mechanism

Board changes

The Board of Kakuzi Plc is pleased to announce that Nicholas Nganga has been appointed Chairman of the Board with immediate effect. He takes over from Graham Mclean who steps down from the role but will remain a non-executive Director. Among his other roles, Nicholas Nganga was Chairman of Safaricom, Kenya's leading telecoms operator, from 2007 until 2020, and is current Chairman of Car & General Kenya Limited and G4S Security.

Dr John Kibunga Kimani has been appointed to the Board of Kakuzi Plc as a non-executive Director with effect from 1 November 2020. Dr John Kimani has extensive experience in the agricultural sector (public and private) including planning, development and administration of small-holder agricultural extension programmes at District level, developing and managing small-holder irrigation projects and preparing long-range plans for land and water resources across Kenya. Notably he led the planning team in the Tana and Athi River basins embracing six districts of what were Central, Eastern and Coast Provinces of Kenya. He has worked with Government agricultural projects aided by the World Bank, SNV of the Netherlands, JICA of Japan, DANIDA of Denmark and GTZ of Germany.

In addition to being a fellow of the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, Dr John Kimani has a Bsc in Agriculture (Makerere University College, Uganda); an Msc in Agricultural Economics (Reading University, U.K) and a Phd in Development Studies, Economics and Socio-anthropology (University of Sussex, U.K). Dr John Kimani is a member of the Agricultural Society of Kenya as well as a member of the Avocado Exporters Association of Kenya.

In addition to the above, the Board agreed on the following:

Independent Human Rights Advisory Committee

To enhance governance structures within Kakuzi Plc, the Board is establishing an Independent Human Rights Advisory Committee (IHRAC). The IHRAC will comprise experienced and distinguished individuals drawn from the human rights sector locally and internationally, and representatives of our stakeholders. Andrew Ndegwa Njoroge, a non-executive independent director of Kakuzi plc, will sit on the IHRAC.

Operational-level Grievance Mechanism

The Board is also upgrading Kakuzi's current alternative dispute resolution process by setting up a full Operational-level Grievance Mechanism (OGM), as defined by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This will enable members of the community to have their grievances heard and resolved quickly, impartially and in accordance with internationally recognized best practices. It will also ensure that appropriate action is taken to deal with anyone who fails to live up to the standards Kakuzi Plc expects of its employees.

Nick Nganga, Chairman of Kakuzi Plc, said:

“Kakuzi sells its produce both locally and across the world. We must always ensure our corporate policies and human rights processes evolve to accommodate feedback and input from our employees, communities and other stakeholders, wherever they are based.

The changes and initiatives announced by the Board today are important steps in this regard. Dr Kimani will be a valuable addition to the Kakuzi Board. He knows Kakuzi well having grown up on the farm. He has an impressive and well-respected track record in the agricultural sector of this country which he built up working in private and public sector enterprises and projects.

“The Independent Human Rights Advisory Committee and the Operational-level Grievance Mechanism are significant enhancements to Kakuzi’s governance processes. They underscore our determination to take a ‘belt and braces’ approach to human rights.”

31st October 2020