**FNB Media Release**

**FNB’s holistic help to minimise the impact of the pandemic on customers, communities**

10 February 2021: In 2020, FNB rolled-out financial and non-financial support to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic on customers and vulnerable communities. The Bank offered digital platform-based Cashflow Relief to individuals and business customers, covering 700,000 agreements with loan balances in excess of R100 billion. FNB Life assisted with R300 million worth of Credit Life claims for customers who sadly were retrenched. FNB waived R120 million in Saswitch and Merchant Services fees.

The Group’s commitment of early invoice settlements for suppliers has, to date, benefitted over 6,048 businesses (including SMEs) with invoices worth nearly R19.8 billion. Furthermore, FNB customers and employees made monetary and eBucks donations for the National Solidarity Fund, generating R1.7 million in contributions.

To alleviate the plight of vulnerable communities, FNB galvanised support for Early Childhood Centres (ECDs) to ensure that children and families who rely on ECDs for meals continued to receive food. The Bank’s staff volunteers raised funds for 7,000 food buckets and parcels to feed ECD families for a month countrywide. Once the lockdown restrictions were relaxed, FNB assisted 480 ECDs to reopen in line with health and safety regulations.

Jacques Celliers, FNB Chief Executive says, “This pandemic has been an extraordinary test of character for customers, businesses and society. Despite the enormous challenges, I’m immensely proud of the resilience and commitment we continue to witness in our business. Our frontline staff have ensured that our points of presence remain available with branches open, contact centres and cash centres operating, and ATMs replenished. Our IT teams built Covid-19 Cashflow Relief capability on our digital platform in record time while ensuring that digital channels, like our FNB App which is zero rated on major networks, remains accessible. Our insurance teams increased capacity significantly to process claims, and still put in extra hours. All these efforts attest to our resilient and nimble business which continues to service all areas of our society.”

FNB’s efforts also extended to helping the elderly, with 12,000 hygiene and protective personal equipment (PPEs) buckets delivered around the country. The Bank participated in “maskathons” in Gauteng, KwaZulu-
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Natal and the Western Cape collecting nearly 180 000 masks which also benefitted social grant recipients at its branches. FNB is also part of FirstRand’s R100 million SPIRE initiative which was funded by the group’s foundations, as well as, FNB and RMB. SPIRE funded projects include 100 additional ICU beds across public hospitals, protective equipment and test kits for hospitals, food parcels for vulnerable communities and 150 care homes.

“As the country continues to deal with the health and financial impact of the pandemic, holistic support remains critical for consumers, businesses and communities. While increased economic activity is expected this year especially as vaccination programs gain momentum, we are anticipating continued lockdowns especially due to the anticipated third wave. Despite some positive signs, a much more robust economic rebound will require all sectors of society to work together and the collective effort must be anchored on partnership, agility, mutual support and shared goals.

We appreciate that our role in society is more than running a successful business and creating employment. As a result, our efforts are always geared to alleviating strain across several spheres of our society through financial and non-financial means. Over and above providing an essential service to customers, we are aware of the need to work with industry partners, government, civil society and communities to minimise hardship. The arrival of a vaccine will hopefully provide further impetus to restoring health and safety, and accelerating efforts to boost our economic activity,” concludes Celliers.

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