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## Focus on economy markets: Volkswagen establishes new "Sub-Saharan Africa" region

- Thomas Schäfer, Chairman and Managing Director of Volkswagen Group South Africa, to assume responsibility for developing and networking 49 states to form the new region
- Volkswagen already has three strong pillars in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya
- Integrated mobility concept in Rwanda also planned

Uitenhage / Wolfsburg – The Volkswagen brand is progressing with its regionalization strategy: the company has established the "Sub-Saharan Africa" region to develop and strengthen the African market. Sub-Saharan Africa is a geographical term used to describe the area of the African continent which lies south of the Sahara. The new fourth region joins the existing regions of North America, South America and China and is the next logical step in the Volkswagen brand's strategy to position itself in focus areas.

The region will be headed by Thomas Schäfer, Chairman and Managing Director of Volkswagen Group South Africa. Organizational details will be elaborated in the coming weeks. Sub-Sahara comprises 49 African states with a total population of some 920 million.



Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage



Thomas Schäfer

Commenting in Uitenhage on the reasons for the brand's engagement in Africa, Schäfer said: "Africa is still one of the blank spots on the Volkswagen map. There is, however, enormous potential in the region to meet the mobility needs of a burgeoning middle class. We will drive forward the development of these new markets in cooperation with various African governments – and gradually strengthen and expand the new Sub-Saharan Africa region."

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The Volkswagen brand currently has three operations in the region: the company has been building cars in South Africa since 1951. Vehicle assembly began in Nigeria in 2015, with assembly in Kenya getting underway in December 2016. In addition, Volkswagen plans to launch an integrated mobility concept in Rwanda at the end of this year. The concept provides for app-based mobility solutions such as car sharing and ride hailing. For this purpose, an environmentally compatible local vehicle production facility is to be established in the capital city Kigali to cover vehicle demand for the integrated mobility concept.

Thomas Schäfer will head the new Sub-Saharan Africa region. The engineer began his career with Volkswagen AG in 2012 as Head of Group Production (Foreign plants). Prior to joining Volkswagen, he held senior management posts at Daimler AG in South Africa and Malaysia. Since February 2015, Thomas Schäfer heads the Volkswagen Group South Africa.

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**About the Volkswagen brand: "We make the future real"**

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2016, Volkswagen produced about 5.99 million vehicles including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta or Passat. Currently, 218,000 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has 7,700 dealerships with 74,000 employees. Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. E-mobility, Smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand are the key strategic topics for the future.

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