



PRESS RELEASE

Ontex opens first production plant in Ethiopia

State of the art technology to serve East African consumers

Aalst-Erembodegem (Belgium), July 11 2017 – Ontex Group NV (“Ontex”) officially opened its new production plant in Ethiopia today. This opening fits in Ontex' ongoing transformation into a leading consumer goods company, and the ambition to expand the personal hygiene business around the world. In Ethiopia, under its Canbebe brand, Ontex can now produce baby diapers that are specifically meeting the needs of African families.

At a festive reception today, in the presence of national and local officials, Ontex opened a new production facility in Hawassa, Ethiopia. The new site is another step in Ontex' expansion strategy, and increases the availability of its products in developing markets. The new 11.000 m2 factory site is equipped with state of the art technology. With this new plant in Ethiopia, Ontex is the first International personal hygiene company to open a plant in Ethiopia, the second largest market of Africa, with a view to serve the East African region. Ontex CEO **Charles Bouaziz** explained the strategy behind the new factory opening: *“At Ontex, we strongly believe in a local market approach. Offering local brands, sourced from manufacturing plants which are strategically located allows us to respond efficiently and flexibly to consumers and customer needs. Our new Ethiopia plant is a perfect illustration of this; it will help us to better serve the African market”.*

The new Hawassa plant will supply the well-known Canbebe diaper brand to the local market. To enhance the profile of Canbebe in Ethiopia, Ontex has reached agreement with the award-winning **Meseret Defar** to be their brand ambassador. A mother of three children, as well as two-time gold medallist at the 2004 and 2012 Olympic Games and beloved Ethiopian, she endorses the brand and spoke about her involvement and experience with the brand during a speech at the opening event: *“As an athlete but also as a mother, I always strive for the best performance, and this is what the Canbebe Comfort & Dry diapers can offer me. Being successful in sports is all about making smart choices, just like you constantly try to do in motherhood”.*

Extensive lab testing and consumer research with mothers across Ethiopia, South Africa and Nigeria last year, led Ontex to conclude that there was a need for baby care specifically adapted for the East African region. **Thierry Viale**, General Manager Ontex Growth Markets Division explained: *“Our new production site in Ethiopia is specifically designed for East-African consumers and offers us the space to develop innovative products. Examples include 12 hour Odor & Wetness Locking, stretchy ears and breathable backsheets”.*

The Hawassa plant is staffed with well-trained, locally recruited employees. The operations team was recently invited to existing Ontex plants, where they received a 3-month hands-on training on operations, which will allow for a good start of the production.

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About Ontex

Ontex is a leading international provider of personal hygiene solutions, with expertise in baby care, feminine care and adult care. Ontex's innovative products are distributed in more than 110 countries through Ontex brands such as BBTips, BioBaby, Pompom, Bigfrol, Canbebe, Canped, ID and Serenity, as well as leading retailer brands.

Employing 11,000 passionate people all over the world, Ontex has a presence in 27 countries, with its headquarters in Aalst, Belgium. Ontex is part of the Bel20 and STOXX® Europe 600. To keep up with the latest news, visit www.ontexglobal.com or follow us on LinkedIn.