

# IRRIGATION INDUSTRY BODY ELECTS YOUNGEST EVER PRESIDENT



**PRESS RELEASE**

*Press release by Netafim South Africa*

**Embargo:** None

**Attached:** Photograph of Michael Esmeraldo/ Michael Esmeraldo speaking at the 2019 SABI congress

Michael Esmeraldo, Netafim South Africa's sales manager for the northern regions of the country, was elected as president of the South African Irrigation Institute (SABI). He has been serving as vice-president of the organisation since 2019 and before that served as chairman of the Mpumalanga branch.

"We are incredibly proud of Michael and wish him well in his two years in office as president of SABI," commented Etienne Erasmus, MD of Netafim South Africa and past president of SABI.

Netafim South Africa has been a company member of SABI since it opened its doors in 1992. The company is very involved in the actions of the institute and various Netafim employees have served on the SABI council. Netafim believes that any and all role-players in the South African irrigation industry must be a member of SABI. "Netafim is honoured to be represented within SABI on this level."

Netafim is in full support of SABI, as the company's mission is in line with what SABI stands for. "The institute prioritises value-add in the industry and wants to ensure that all actions taken are in line with the set norms and standards. Secondly, the institute's ultimate mission is to save water through highly efficient irrigation." Netafim can fully align itself with these values.

## **The Next Generation**

At 30, Michael is the youngest ever president of SABI. "What a privilege! I want to encourage younger players in the irrigation industry to be actively involved in organised industry activities. I also want to make young people who are still considering their career options aware of the many amazing opportunities in the irrigation industry."

Michael says he is proud to be part of the important impact that SABI has in the irrigation industry. "Our greatest challenge and duty in the irrigation industry is to continuously improve the way we use water. The only way to ensure a sustainable future is to use water even more sparingly. Another important challenge the industry faces is to ensure that the next generation of irrigation experts are sufficiently trained and involved in the industry. "By taking on this, we will ensure a sustainable future for the irrigation industry in the country and continue to help farmers use water optimally."

## Michael's Journey

Michael started his career in the irrigation industry when he joined Netafim in 2014. He started as junior agronomist in the Nelspruit region and was promoted to senior agronomist after two years. In February 2019, Michael was appointed as regional sales manager working from Netafim's Nelspruit office and joined the managerial team in his current role in April 2020.

Michael holds a B.Sc degree in Agronomy and Agricultural Economics as well as an M.Sc degree in Soil Science.

This young man is passionate about agriculture and irrigation and believes that agricultural organisations have a crucial role to play in the future of our agricultural industry. "I believe organisations such as SABI must play an even more prominent role as link between roleplayers in the industry. By further leveraging the position of SABI as link in the irrigation industry, we can increase synergy between suppliers, retail and the end-user."

Michael lives in Nelspruit with his wife and loveable poodles. He is a massive sports lover and would rarely miss a rugby or cricket match. "I love playing golf, reading, and building a proper braai. I secretly believe I am a master braaier!" He loves a good adventure and dreams of visiting the three greatest lakes in Africa, the Malawi, Tanganyika and Victoria Lakes, **on** motorcycle.

"I have worked hard to build a valuable network throughout my career to date and continue to network with industry roleplayers in order to learn from others as well as contribute to their journeys. I believe working for Netafim as a wholesale supplier to the irrigation industry puts me in an optimal position to lead the industry organisation. As we work with the entire value chain, I understand all parties and I can build relationships throughout the industry."

Michael is very excited about agriculture and agricultural irrigation in South Africa and specifically his region. "We work mostly with macadamia, avocado and citrus in our area. I see a lot of potential for the expansion of precision irrigation in this region. It is mostly hot and humid in our region and from time to time we even have to be careful of animals and snakes while doing our work, so there is never a dull moment."

His most important message for the agricultural industry is that modern farming is not only about using the latest technology, but also about farming more efficiently. "We have to use water, fertiliser and other inputs efficiently to get optimal benefit per unit of input." This is why he believes in precision irrigation and that it must be adopted across the industry.

"My message to the irrigation industry is to stay positive. We can and have a responsibility to make a massive impact in the agricultural industry and the country. As author Thomas Friedman said: The pessimists are always right, but it is the optimists that change the world."

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## About SABI

SABI – the South African Irrigation Institute – strives to ensure optimal irrigation in agriculture, landscape and all environmental settings. SABI's ultimate mission is the saving of water.

SABI, a technical-based Institute, has more than 450 members, including designers, engineers, soil scientists, crop experts, entrepreneurs, economists, and irrigation farmers.

SABI's company members - including manufacturers and suppliers of irrigation, water and all related equipment – range from South African to African and international companies.

SABI's initiatives to enhance irrigation and water knowledge in technical and the general public arenas include membership meetings, SABI Congress, SABI magazine (a bi-monthly glossy magazine) and training via IrrigationWise Academy.

Feel free to reach out to SABI about any of these initiatives or find out more about becoming a member: [info@sabi.co.za](mailto:info@sabi.co.za)

## About Netafim

Netafim is the world's largest irrigation company and the global leader in precision irrigation solutions. It is active in 110 countries with 33 subsidiaries and 17 manufacturing plants worldwide, one of which is Netafim South Africa, housed in Kraaifontein in the Western Cape. Netafim South Africa has been serving South Africa and its neighbouring countries with irrigation solutions and services since 1992.

Driven by its slogan, 'Grow more with less™', its offering includes a wide range of leading irrigation and complementary solutions across all crops, conditions, and terrains. This includes drippers and driplines, micro and macro sprinklers, valves, filters, water meters, crop management technology (CMT), and ever-developing digital farming solutions.

The extensive product offer is supported by experienced agronomic and technical support based on years of accumulated knowledge as the leader in precision irrigation solutions. For more information, visit [www.netafim.co.za](http://www.netafim.co.za)

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