

## **VARTA® from Johnson Controls now distributed by Auto X, the leading automotive battery manufacturer and distributor in South Africa**

***With its innovative technology VARTA® is at the forefront to move automotive aftermarket battery business to the next level. Driven by OEM requirements translated to sustainable aftermarket needs.***

South Africa, 20 April 2018 – Johnson Controls and Auto X today announce the distribution of VARTA® automotive batteries by Auto X in South Africa and selected countries across the African continent. Through Auto X's established and extensive distribution network, Johnson Controls, the world's largest manufacturer of automotive batteries, will improve local availability of VARTA® while extending its market presence and building brand awareness in Africa.

Automotive markets in Africa, and other emerging markets face an increasing demand for compliance with international environmental regulations on motor vehicle emissions. VARTA® AGM batteries are capable of powering the most demanding vehicles and offer three times the endurance of conventional batteries.

Manufactured with up to 20 percent less emissions, they are the driving force behind the fuel-saving, technologically-advanced Start-Stop engines. VARTA® AGM are factory-fitted by major car manufacturers such as Audi, BMW and Mercedes-Benz among others, and are trusted by drivers across the world.

Established more than a century ago, the VARTA® brand has come a long way and distinguished itself as the leader in automotive battery innovation. Globally, Johnson Controls powers about one in every three cars. What makes VARTA® unique is its PowerFrame grid technology and manufacturing process that uses 20% less energy and produces 20% fewer greenhouse gases than other manufacturing methods. This grid design provides superior cranking power with up to 70% better electrical flow than other grid technologies, and it is up to 66% more durable and more corrosion-resistant.

As of today, this premium brand is available to Auto X's entire network of customers including more than 3000 resellers in South Africa and selected African countries.

"We are proud to be appointed by, and associated with Johnson Controls as the official distributor for VARTA® advanced technology batteries. From an environmental perspective it is critical that Africa catches up and contributes towards a greener automotive future, and we are excited to be instrumental in this," says Glenn Geldenhuis, Chief Executive Officer of Auto X. "Our relationship with Johnson Controls started back in 2015 and is based on a shared vision, a focus on high quality and strong operational synergies. The VARTA® brand fits seamlessly into our line-up of battery products, making Auto X and Johnson Controls a winning combination."

"Africa as an emerging market holds excellent opportunities for us. We looked for a distributor that has an extensive and solid distribution network. Auto X with its national footprint in South Africa as well as an established network within the Sub-Saharan African region is the perfect choice to expand our presence into the emerging market of Africa," says Bart Timmermans, Director Business & Distribution Development, Middle East, Turkey and Africa, Johnson Controls. "In Auto X, we've gained a partner that offers excellent after-sales and technical support, and one that is focused on increasing brand visibility and awareness. We are confident that Auto X is the distribution partner to help VARTA® achieve brand awareness and brand loyalty in the African aftermarket."

“More than 70% of OEMs worldwide rely on Johnson Controls AGM technology. Powered by VARTA®, this has a direct impact on the battery replacement market where motorists prefer to replace like for like,” commented Bart Timmermans.

“Our purpose is to continue offering our current customer base a complete battery solution and full after-sales service. The idea is that VARTA® will be positioned as the battery of choice for new markets and requirements,” concluded Geldenhuis.