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22nd Century Group Appoints Cliff Fleet Chief Executive Officer

WILLIAMSVILLE, N.Y.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- 22nd Century Group, Inc. (NYSE American: [XXII](#)), a plant biotechnology company that is a leader in tobacco harm reduction, Very Low Nicotine Content (VLNC) tobacco, and hemp/cannabis plant research, announced today that the Company has appointed Clifford B. Fleet to serve as the Company's President and CEO, effective August 3, 2019. Mr. Fleet has also been elected to serve as a member of the Company's Board of Directors.

Mr. Fleet has served as a strategic advisor to 22nd Century Group since December 2018. Mr. Fleet was previously the President and Chief Executive Officer of Philip Morris USA ("PM USA") from 2013 to 2017, where he oversaw PM USA and John Middleton, a leading manufacturer of machine-made cigars.

"We are extremely pleased that Cliff has agreed to lead 22nd Century as its President and CEO," said James W. Cornell, Director & Chairman of the Board of 22nd Century Group. "The Board has had the pleasure of working closely with Cliff over the past several months, and it is clear that he is the right person to lead the Company forward. He has led the development of the Company's new vision and forward-looking strategies to vigorously pursue the enormous opportunities in the hemp/cannabis space. Cliff is a clear and strategic thinker, trustworthy partner and proven team builder ready to lead 22nd Century to new heights."

Mr. Cornell continued, "Cliff's decades of tobacco-industry experience have been and will continue to be invaluable in gaining FDA approval for the Company's Modified Risk Tobacco Product application and the subsequent commercialization of 22nd Century's proprietary VLNC cigarettes."

"I am honored to join 22nd Century Group as its President and CEO," said Mr. Fleet. "I have truly enjoyed working with the Company's talented Board and executive team over the past several months. The Company's efforts in tobacco-harm reduction are coming to fruition, and it is extremely well-positioned to expand its leadership position in the emerging and fast-growing industry of hemp/cannabis."

"There are enormous opportunities to drive significant value creation in the hemp/cannabis space," Mr. Fleet continued. "I look forward to strengthening the Company's leadership position in hemp/cannabis biotechnology and plant genetics, and then leverage this strength with opportunities across the hemp/cannabis value chain to create significant long-term value for our shareholders."

Since departing PM USA in 2017, Mr. Fleet has supported numerous businesses and non-profits as a Managing Partner at SIR, a strategic management consultancy based in Richmond, VA. Mr. Fleet is also the incoming chair of ChamberRVA, the chamber of commerce serving the city of Richmond and the surrounding region. He also serves as President of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Inc., and is a member of the Board of Trustees for the William & Mary Foundation.

Prior to his role as PM USA's President and CEO, Mr. Fleet was PM USA's Vice President and General Manager of Marlboro. Prior to that, he was Altria's Vice President of Strategy and Business Development, and prior to that, he held a variety of management and leadership positions at the Altria family of companies in Investor Relations, Market Information/Research, Sales, and Operations. A native of Virginia, Cliff earned four academic degrees from the College of William & Mary, including a BA, MA, JD and MBA.

About 22nd Century Group, Inc.

22nd Century is a plant biotechnology company focused on technology which allows it to decrease the level of nicotine in tobacco plants and to modify the level of cannabinoids in hemp/cannabis plants through genetic engineering and modern plant breeding. The Company's primary mission in tobacco is to reduce the harm caused by smoking. The Company's primary mission in hemp/cannabis is to develop proprietary hemp/cannabis plants for important new medicines and agricultural crops. Visit www.xxiiicentury.com for more information.

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements: This press release contains forward-looking information, including all statements that are not statements of historical fact regarding the intent, belief or current expectations of 22nd Century Group, Inc., its directors or its officers with respect to the contents of this press release, including but not limited to our future revenue expectations. The words “may,” “would,” “will,” “expect,” “estimate,” “anticipate,” “believe,” “intend” and similar expressions and variations thereof are intended to identify forward-looking statements. We cannot guarantee future results, levels of activity or performance. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date that they were made. These cautionary statements should be considered with any written or oral forward-looking statements that we may issue in the future. Except as required by applicable law, including the securities laws of the United States, we do not intend to update any of the forward-looking statements to conform these statements to reflect actual results, later events or circumstances, or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events. You should carefully review and consider the various disclosures made by us in our annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, filed on March 6, 2019, including the section entitled “Risk Factors,” and our other reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission which attempt to advise interested parties of the risks and factors that may affect our business, financial condition, results of operation and cash flows. If one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if the underlying assumptions prove incorrect, our actual results may vary materially from those expected or projected.

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