Construction Starting On Schedule

MONTREAL, QUEBEC--(Marketwired - Dec 22, 2016) - [Semafo Inc.] (TSX:SMF)(OMX:SMF) is pleased to announce the Council of Ministers of the Government of Burkina Faso has approved its mining permit application for the Natougou Gold Project.

Receipt of the mining permit enables development of the Natougou Project to proceed on schedule. Construction activities are expected to begin in the coming weeks with the mobilisation of the bulk earthworks team on site. The first gold pour is expected in the second half of 2018.

A key component of the Corporation's growth platform, the Natougou Project is located in southeastern Burkina Faso, some 320 kilometers from the capital of Ouagadougou. In February 2016, the Corporation announced a positive feasibility study[1] for Natougou, which confirmed the economic viability of an open-pit, carbon-in-pulp project giving an after-tax IRR of 48% at a gold price of US$1,100 per ounce. Initial capital expenditures are estimated at US$219 million, which includes US$42 million in pre-stripping expenditures and an US$18-million contingency. During the first three years, average annual production at Natougou is estimated at over 226,000 ounces at a total cash cost of US$283 per ounce and an all-in sustaining cost of US$374 per ounce.

[1] For more details, refer to press release of February 25, 2016 or the NI 43-101 technical report for Natougou, which is filed on www.sedar.com and available at www.semafo.com

About SEMAFO

SEMAFO is a Canadian-based mining company with gold production and exploration activities in West Africa. The Corporation operates the Mana Mine in Burkina Faso, which includes the high-grade satellite deposits of Siou and Fofina,and is developing the advanced gold deposit of Natougou. SEMAFO's strategic focus is to maximize shareholder value by effectively managing its existing assets as well as pursuing organic and strategic growth opportunities.

CAUTION CONCERNING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This press release contains forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions and accordingly, actual results and future events could differ materially from those expressed or implied in such statements. You are hence cautioned not to place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include words or expressions such as "on schedule", "expected", "coming", "initial", "estimated", "pursuing", "growth", "opportunities" and other similar words or expressions. Factors that could cause future results or events to differ materially from current expectations expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements include the ability of the Natougou Project to proceed on schedule, the ability to begin construction activities in the coming weeks, the ability to meet the initial capital expenditures budget of US$219 million, the ability to achieve a first gold pour in the second half of 2018, the ability to produce over 226,000 ounces at total cash cost of US$283 per ounce and all-in sustaining cost of US$374 per ounce during the first three years at Natougou, the accuracy of our assumption, the ability to execute on our strategic focus, fluctuation in the price of currencies, gold or operating costs, mining industry risks, uncertainty as to calculation of mineral reserves and resources, delays, political and social stability in Africa (including our ability to maintain or renew licenses and permits) and other risks described in SEMAFO's documents filed with Canadian securities regulatory authorities. You can find further information with respect to these and other risks in SEMAFO's 2015 Annual MD&A, as updated in the First, Second and Third Quarter MD&As, and other filings made with Canadian securities regulatory authorities and available at www.sedar.com. These documents are also available on our website at www.semafo.com. SEMAFO disclaims any obligation to update or revise these forward-looking statements, except as required by applicable law.

The information in this release is subject to the disclosure requirements of SEMAFO under the *Swedish Securities Market Act* and/or the Swedish *Financial Instruments Trading Act*. This information was publicly communicated on December 22, 2016 at 3:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

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