



Gearing to grow with the industry and continent

The past 100 years have seen an unparalleled rate of scientific discoveries and technological advances. From the PC to TV, radio and the internet, all the way through to cars, rocketry, nuclear power and antibiotics, mankind continues to push the boundaries of what was previously thought possible, redefining our collective future. Here at home in Africa, our industry and sector have undergone a similar transformation and evolution – with developments in engineering and construction driving everything from high early strength cement to concrete design codes. PPC Technical Consultant Steve Crosswell reflects on some of the most notable of these changes, as well as PPC's own growth as a leading brand on the continent...

As the developing world urbanises, the global cement industry continues to experience significant growth. With the majority of the world's future 2.5 billion new urban inhabitants projected to live in Africa and Asia in the next 30 years (*World Urbanisation Prospects, 2014 revision*), countries and populations in these continents are strongly influencing developments in the quality and the efficiency of the cement production process. This is something we are part of – and contributing to – as PPC.

2017 marks our 125th year of existence on the continent. From a company that started out in South Africa in 1892 and established a number of plants across the country, our subsequent investment in Africa has been an extensive one. Our expansion into the sub-Saharan region began in earnest in Botswana in 1996 when our blending plant was commissioned. This was followed by a move into Zimbabwe in 2001 with our acquisition of Portland Holdings. In the 16 years since, we have gone on to grow our footprint to include a 35% stake in Habesha Cement in Ethiopia; 69% of a new cement plant in the DRC (currently undergoing final testing) and a new mill in Harare, Zimbabwe commissioned in 2016. Prior to this, in August 2015, the Prime Minister of Rwanda opened that country's only integrated cement plant, CIMERWA, in which PPC has a 51% stake. Work on our US\$24 million (R1,7 billion), 1 million tpa kiln at Slurry (SK9) in the North West in South Africa is on schedule, making us a truly African brand.

This growth and expansion speaks of our group's long-term vision for the future, as an enabler on the continent. Something we are committed to making a reality.

Our most recent CSI initiative – the rollout of mobile science laboratories – at 12 disadvantaged schools across the country for example, has seen us reach over 10 500 learners, paving their path for a potential future in the industry. This pipeline will be ably supported by our bursary scheme, which will see qualifying candidates able to learn at the various schools of civil engineering at our leading local universities, emerging as engineers conversant with structural design or equipped with relevant skills to take them further in our sector.

From a heritage perspective, many projects we are proud to have contributed towards additionally highlight how industry developments have ensured these become legacy structures. The development of reinforced and pre-stressed concrete design codes which gave engineers more confidence in designing and specifying concrete, have continued to



push the limits of design – making projects like the Nelson Mandela Bridge in Johannesburg (2005), the Soccer City stadium in Soweto (2009) and the Gouda Wind Farm Precast Towers in the Western Cape (2015) possible. Other trends which have had significant impact on buildings such as Sasol’s new head office in Sandton and the Mall of Africa in Midrand are faster construction practices and the related demand for high early strength cement, as well as the long-term swing from site-batched concrete to ready mixed concrete.

The introduction and development of concrete admixtures (which greatly expanded the fields of application for concrete as a construction material), a trend towards pumping concrete and the change in focus from concrete strength to concrete durability continue to influence not only the design of our own plants on the continent, but the solutions we bring to a region from the outset.

As we evolve into a material solutions provider, we will continue to focus on product innovation, product consistency and of course quality: our core brand promise from inception. Investment in research and partnerships will remain a critical part of this approach, and we will carry on working extensively with the industry bodies in our space.

As for the next 125 years, we’re excited to see where they will take all of us: how they will challenge PPC to continue to develop solution-driven products; how we will need to refine and rethink our offering; and, above all, how we in turn can drive growth and development on the continent through our people, products and committed contribution.

Ends.

About PPC Ltd

A leading supplier of cement and related products in southern Africa, PPC Ltd has nine cement factories in South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. In 2016 PPC commissioned its fifth milling depot, located in Harare, Zimbabwe, bringing PPC’s current capacity to around nine million tons of cement products each year. As part of its strategy and long-term vision, PPC is expanding its operations in South Africa, and extending its footprint into the DRC and Ethiopia.

PPC’s Materials business, comprising Safika Cement, Pronto Readymix (including Ulula Ash) and, the recently acquired 3Q Mahuma Concrete, forms part of the company’s channel management strategy for southern Africa. As a result of these acquisitions PPC’s footprint has grown to include 26 readymix batching plants across South Africa and Mozambique and the capacity to produce half a million tons of fly ash.

PPC also produces aggregates with its Mooiplaas aggregates quarry in Gauteng having the largest aggregate production capacity in South Africa. PPC Lime, one of the largest lime producers in the southern hemisphere, produces metallurgical-grade lime, burnt dolomite and limestone.

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