



PPC Marketing: SAFCEC opinion editorial

### **South Africa's cities of the future: are we #ReadyToDeliver?**

*With Africa's urban population growing at a rate of 3.5% per annum and 65% of growth happening in smaller cities and urban areas, pressure on our cities and their infrastructure is increasing. Given that the median age of African cities is less than 20 years old, Rajesh Harripersadh, PPC Key Accounts Manager, notes that the future of our country and continent is critically linked to the success of our cities. This has to start with infrastructure development – meeting current needs while gearing for the medium and long-term future – an important discussion at this year's recent Safcec (South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors) conference in Gauteng.*

Themed #ReadyToDeliver, Safcec's 2017 conference unpacked some of the most critical challenges facing the local engineering and construction industries at present, including when the sector can expect to see critical spending decisions made on key infrastructure upgrades and new builds.

"With Africa set to reach its demographic dividend by 2050 and our country's population becoming increasingly youthful, cities currently find themselves in a pivot space: facing a massive challenge or opportunity," says Harripersadh. "For South Africa and Africa to capitalise on and realise this opportunity however, we cannot plan and execute as we have in the past. We also have to make critical decisions now – without hesitation or delay in committing to key projects."

Changes in how we live, work and interact in cities, coupled with space and sustainability constraints as well as mobility and technology requirements means that a new approach is needed for design and infrastructure creation. "Urban areas of the future cannot necessarily be modelled on cities of the past. They must simultaneously boost business; enable convenience and encourage suburban activity; and bring work closer to home – mitigating the time and cost of travel. They must also reduce pressure on land and existing infrastructure pressure in towns and cities so as to ensure long-term sustainability." Harripersadh adds that an additional element of social consciousness must be added to this. Integration and functionality must enable communities to thrive and help to combat the poverty that is becoming systemic in our urban areas by creating access to key infrastructure.

He emphasises that the massive scale of development needed – and the time this will take to deliver – means that decisions about investing in fully functional urban areas that meet integrated needs must be made now. "Government and the greater cement industry need to work harder to clarify policy uncertainty, commit resources and finance, and unlock procurement processes to initiate both new build projects and upgrades and maintenance work on critical infrastructure including schools and clinics, roads and transport, water and sanitation, among others. This will ensure we get the best possible value from infrastructure throughout its lifetime, as opposed to starting to rebuild after disasters or system failure."

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With Gauteng alone currently planning vast new human settlements; healthcare, education and recreation facilities; and how best to integrate land-use for residential, commercial and industrial purposes, the future vision is a compelling one – if players work together to create a conducive collaborative environment.

Harripersadh notes that these are some of the conversations PPC is looking to continue with government and Safcec beyond this year's conference. "We need to work together to take advantage of local development opportunities and shape the cities and urban areas we live and work in. As an industry, it's up to us to drive this change. Only then will we ensure that future cities are sustainable spaces where all our communities can thrive," he concludes.

Ends.

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### **About PPC Ltd**

A leading supplier of cement and related products in southern Africa, PPC has 11 cement factories in South Africa, Botswana, DRC, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. In 2016, PPC commissioned its fifth milling depot, located in Harare, Zimbabwe. The recent commissioning of PPC's new plants in DRC and Ethiopia bring PPC's capacity to around eleven and a half million tonnes of cement products each year. As part of its strategy and long-term vision, PPC is expanding its operations in South Africa with the construction of a new kiln line (SK9) at PPC Slurry outside Mafikeng in the North-West province.

PPC's Materials business, comprising Safika Cement, Pronto Readymix (including Ulula Ash) and 3Q Mahuma Concrete, forms part of the company's channel management strategy for southern Africa. PPC's footprint in the readymix sector has grown to include 26 batching plants across South Africa and Mozambique and the capacity to produce half a million tonnes 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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