



PPC Marketing: MBSA press release

Future cities must be built by current generations

As real employment continues contracting in South Africa, its impact is being felt among our the most vulnerable in our communities: our women and youth. 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, local similarities are adding to this pressure. Given that the median age of African cities 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 their infrastructure and development – meaning that the construction value chain from material manufacturers and suppliers all the way through to engineers and construction teams have to gear to include the youth well into the future. The process has to begin now at a very practical level, ensuring active skills and knowledge transfer – something that was discussed at this year's Master Builders South Africa (MBSA) Conference currently underway in Cape Town.

Africa is set to reach its demographic dividend by 2050 – creating a massive challenge or opportunity for cities across the continent. For countries to capitalise on and realise this opportunity however, they cannot plan and execute as they have in the past.

“Changes in how we live, work and interact in cities, coupled with space and sustainability constraints and mobility and technology mean that urban areas of the future cannot necessarily be modelled on cities of the past,” explains Harripersadh. “Design and space planning 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 land pressure in existing towns and cities so as to ensure long-term sustainability.” Linked to all of this is an additional element of social consciousness: integration and functionality must enable communities to thrive and address the poverty that is becoming systemic in our urban areas.

Designing and building our cities of the future therefore has to be done *in partnership* not only with Government, but also with the current generation: the custodians of these spaces in the future to come. “This requires a diametric shift in approach from most contributors in the current infrastructure and construction value chain,” notes Harripersadh. “Young people have to be empowered with the skills and real-life experience they need to build their cities of the future. As such, we have to actively change the current demographic of contractors and suppliers to be more inclusive and, correspondingly, sustainable.”

He adds that the massive scale of development needed means that there is room for everyone to contribute – as opposed to compete – to create fully functional representative urban areas that meet integrated needs. “Because capital start-up costs in construction and material manufacturing remain prohibitive for many entrepreneurs, current players and Government need to work harder to not only provide finance options, but also then assist with real skills transfer. Bursaries can often prove a viable point of entry in terms of skills transfer – as we've seen across the continent at our PPC operations.”



Access to quality building supplies is also an issue for many smaller contractors. “Again here, initiatives like our Builder’s Box in Soweto and our latest PPC container in Ulundi – where building SMEs can access building materials *in* their communities saving time and transport costs – can challenge the status quo, and create real opportunities to grow and compete. Sustainable organic growth of small-scale contractors is critical for them to be able to access larger opportunities in the long-term, which we need them to do in order to succeed.”

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 start to actively transform value chains.

Harripersadh says that these are some of the conversations PPC is looking to spearhead beyond this year’s recently held Master Builders Conference. “Young city dwellers need to be part of the revolution most of them are seeking. They need to be empowered to take advantage of development opportunities and shape the cities and urban areas they 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 of our communities can thrive,” he concludes.

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 Ready Mix (including Ulula Ash), and the recently acquired 3Q Mahuma Concrete, form 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 ready-mix 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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