

Introduction:

Honourable ministers and dignitaries present

Distinguished guests

Valued partners and media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

Setting the Scene

We currently find ourselves on the continent of opportunity – living at a time like none other before.

As Africa's economic growth trajectory continues upward – defying the current global trend – its critical need for infrastructure development mirrors this path. Countries across the continent are working to deliver on this need, as evidenced by the net worth of mega-projects across the continent growing by a staggering 46.2% in 2014 alone (as per the African Construction Trends Report compiled by Deloitte).

Mega-projects require mega resources however, including construction materials such as cement. These resources also need to be manufactured and supplied locally in order to boost local businesses and economies and ensure sustainable job creation.

Each of us here present is increasingly being called upon to answer this need: to unite as Africans in building Africa and realising the potential of the continent.

Our African dream is not a new one – or arguably a unique one. It is one which generations of people and communities before ours have striven to achieve. It is one we were all born into as a dream of our own.

To realise it though, requires an exceptional approach. An approach that seeks to drive mutual growth through purposeful partnerships and long term sustainability.

It is this very reason that PPC Limited; in partnership with the Barnet Group and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has invested in the construction of a one million ton per annum cement factory and associated quarry, located 20km from Kimpese.

PPC Overview

So who is PPC?

An African company at heart, PPC's expansion on the continent began in 2000 with the acquisition of PPC Zimbabwe.

Today we are key stakeholders and investors in and around the continent:

Our cement operational footprint and capacity spans across South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Rwanda with DRC and Ethiopia being our most recent investments.

The group also has five blending facilities and nine readymix batching plants after acquiring Safika Cement, Pronto Readymix, 3Q Readymix and Ulula Ash in South Africa. Currently, PPC is the largest cement producer in Southern Africa with over 8-million-ton p.a capacity.

Our mandate and role on the continent has however changed – given the new opportunities the continent presents. As such, we have recently revised our vision and strategic aspiration – igniting meaningful change both within and outside our organisation.

All our efforts are truly aligned to this new vision of aiming *“To be a world-class provider of materials and solutions into the basic services sector, taking a strategic approach to more than doubling our business every ten years.”*

Our organisations' story is truly a triumphant one – a focused business that reflects the strengths of its people, products and services. We believe we have a sustainable business model – one built to last for all stakeholders.

WHY PPCB Investment

Despite the world economic slump in 2008 that brought the growth rate down to 2.8% due to the global financial crisis, the DRC has been posting an estimated annual average economic growth rate of 7.7% year on year during the 2010-2015 period.

Consequently, economic development and associated infrastructure are critically needed to accommodate this growth.

Currently the growth in Congo's infrastructure and building industry is supported by imports and one local producer; specifically regarding cement.

Given this context, one can thus see how – and why – the construction and operation of the PPCB facility holds substantial benefits for business and the country not only as a result of the growing local manufacture of cement now being a reality, but also by opening export markets and positively reversing the flow of goods and revenue.

As such, we believe that our world-class facility is a game-changer for DRC, particularly considering the viability of adding value to DRC's growing economy. The PPCB project also showcases PPC's pan African context-specific approach to partnering for expansion. In addressing present demand and simultaneously providing for anticipated growth; our new state of the art factory has a production capacity of over a million tons p.a. which will be commissioned in the first quarter of 2017.

The PPC way

But we don't see ourselves as just cement producers; we see ourselves as playing a bigger role in contributing to the growth and development of all our chosen markets; including the Republic of Congo.

PPC is passionate about leaving lasting legacies in all our markets; and who better to create those legacies than the local talent.

From the inception of our project in 2013, we have since developed sustainable initiatives that go beyond just our operations that are geared towards improving the livelihoods of the people of DRC.

One example is the PPCB Technical Skills Academy; which is a school that PPCB Barnet DRC has created to train the young and enthusiastic people from the surrounding villages where our factory is located.

The Technical Skills Academy commenced its first training module on the 1st of July 2015 with the first promotion that has worked very well so far and has been a great success. Having quality staff and the teachers, the module is well delivered to the satisfaction of participants and our objectives.

The training is based on the basic principles for an engineer in the following areas:

- Mechanical and Electrical
- Skills for everyday life
- Basic English language skills

Over 45 students have already graduated with most to be employed by PPCB.

We are currently pursuing an accreditation for the certification in partnership with the University of Kinshasa which means that artisans will qualify for a number of formal job opportunities.

Other initiatives include;

- Implementation of Malaria vector control programme by spraying and fogging on a regular basis within the villages located in Primary Sphere of Influence and the Secondary Sphere of Influence (Zamba, Malanga, Malanga Gare, Nkumba, Kuzi, Nkoko, Kiasungwa, and Mankayi).
- Provision of clean water at Zamba and Malanga villages.
- Providing assistance to local communities in developing skills and improving crop performance for household consumption and commercial use (Vegetable production and small farming activities).
- Construction of the market where local community will sell and buy their respective produce (Vegetables, chicken, etc).
- Coaching of single mothers living within four villages located in PSI – establishment of a Craft and Art centre.
- Improvement of the Malanga Health Centre building and assistance with some medical equipment.

So ladies and gentlemen,

Through these various initiatives and partnerships, PPCB is striving to create a foundation for meaningful sustainability that enables DRC's workforce and the local community to benefit from PPCB's progress: ensuring people acquire critical skills so as to drive their own prosperity, and to enjoy that prosperity themselves.

In conclusion,

We are honoured to be part of the growth and development of this country and we will continue to seek opportunities to capitalise on what our commitment to sustainability can influence and enable in our immediate environment, as well as in the greater region of DRC – beyond cement production alone – and deliver on our brand promise of “Strength beyond the bag”.

When we speak of “strength beyond the bag” it is more than just words to us;

- It is the strength of our name and our promise to our customers, stakeholders, staff and communities.
- It is the strength of our guarantee. The integrity placed behind every purchase, every interaction; the knowledge that when you buy PPC you too place your trust and name on our word.
- It is the strength of partnership. We choose to partner with organisations that will help foster growth in our environment and help improve our societies.

With that said; I would like to thank you for this opportunity and invite all of you to be part of this journey – to actively seek out ways for us as a collective to come that much closer to realising our African dream, defining clear goals and milestones that we can work towards together.

May the Africa we all seek, begin with each of us...

I thank you.