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AFRISAM MAKES SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO CSI INITIATIVES

Leading black-controlled building construction materials group, AfriSam believes that in order to build a sustainable future for southern Africa corporate investment in the community needs to be more than mere lip service.

“We recognise that, as a large corporate company which derives its income from a local market, our social responsibility to provide upliftment to those who are less fortunate is of prime importance,” Tsholo Diale, corporate social responsibility manager for AfriSam, says.

Over the past years AfriSam has been ‘putting its money where its mouth is’ by being actively involved in numerous CSI initiatives throughout South Africa and neighbouring countries including Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.

“These initiatives range from low cost housing to education and healthcare,” Diale says. “We believe that one cannot count the actual capital invested in all instances - the indicator of involvement is in the medium- to long term outcome which derives from our participation in those communities in which we operate.”

AfriSam's CSI strategy has prioritised education and conservation as primary focus areas in its plans going forward, with a considerable proportion of the multi-million CSI budget in 2008 having been directed to these areas.

"Like all large companies, we have been affected by the ongoing global skills shortage. This dearth of knowledgeable and experienced people has had a negative effect on all industrial economic players. By channelling a portion of our CSI funds towards the educational sector, we aim to address the skills shortage issue at grass roots level," Diale says.

One such project is the Whole School Development Programme (WSDP), which AfriSam is implementing in partnership with the National Business Initiative (NBI). The WSDP aims to contribute to the organisational culture of schools and to support them as they develop into educational institutions, which will serve the learning needs of pupils as well as the adjoining community. Over the last five years, this programme has benefitted about 30 schools across four provinces.

The company also supports schools in the form of donations of learning equipment and the upgrading of learning facilities.

AfriSam's upliftment of communities within which it operates extends to assisting with infrastructure that will help improve the livelihoods of the local communities, such as community halls and daycare centres.

In a bid to help minimise the impact of HIV/AIDS, the company is involved in a number of initiatives. These include the sponsorship of ARV dispensing centres and providing support for organisations caring for those infected with or affected by the disease.

“Although the company has a structured community involvement plan every year, we realise that not all social requirements can be predicted. As such we make an allowance for emergency circumstances such as natural disasters which may result in urgent needs,” Diale says.

In this regard, AfriSam played an active role in providing relief to victims of the devastating floods which hit Namibia last year. Assistance was provided in the form of cash donations, cement donations, financing of repairs for damaged infrastructure and community work by AfriSam employees.

The company is involved in various other initiatives of this nature and continuously strives to improve on the impact of its contribution.

“South Africa and its neighbouring countries are constantly faced with a number of socio-economic challenges. As a responsible corporate citizen, we see it as our role to help society address these challenges as far as we possibly can,” Diale concludes.

CAPTION FOR CSI 01: The Minister of Health in Botswana, Ms Lesego Motsumi, receives a fourteen seater Toyota Quantum from AfriSam on behalf of the Botswana

Retired Nurses Society (BORNUS). BORNUS is a non governmental organisation that aims to provide quality accessible health care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans, the chronically ill and the aged. With Ms Motsumi is Dr Eltie Links, AfriSam's chairman.

CAPTION FOR CSI 02: Dr Eltie Links, AfriSam's chairman, at the official handover ceremony of seven ARV dispensing centres held in Motokwe, Botswana. AfriSam sponsored dispensing facilities for seven villages in Kweneng district.

CAPTION FOR CSI 03: Hannes Meyer, general manager for AfriSam's Ulco plant and Mayor of the Dikgatlong Municipality, Martha Louw, turn the sod to mark the commencement of construction of the Delpportshoop community hall in the Northern Cape. AfriSam is sponsoring the hall which the community will use for recreational activities. The project created jobs for small, medium and micro-sized enterprises from the local community.

ENDS ... FEBRUARY 2009

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