

GM achieves success in key African markets

GM Africa has invested over R1.7bn in its Africa operations in recent years which was geared at strengthening the company's manufacturing base in North Africa through its Egypt operation and in sub-Saharan Africa through its South Africa and Kenya operations.



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"We are now ideally placed to service our markets across the continent through these three assembly plants and also our footprint of over 300 dealers," Mario Spangenberg, president of GM Africa, said.

As the company continues to grow its sales volumes in African markets, particularly in the light commercial vehicle segment, Spangenberg said it was important to focus on efficient and competitive manufacturing operations in all three countries - South Africa, Kenya and Egypt. "In addition, we are also expanding our distribution footprint across the continent and ensure effective and quality after sales service to our customers."

To this end General Motors has seen 17 new facilities and show rooms open in Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Algeria (4) Egypt (4) and Ghana in the last 18 months. "Later this year new dealerships will open in Uganda and Mauritius," said Spangenberg.

Distribution centre

Meanwhile the 38,000 m² parts distribution centre located in Port Elizabeth is now fully geared up to provide the required parts and service support to distributors on the continent.

Spangenberg said despite the decline in sales in the automotive industry in Africa during the first seven months of the year, GM sales continued to grow. "Within our Africa Operations we sold around 107,000 vehicles during the first seven months of this year. Overall our sales in Africa were up almost 7% versus an industry decline of 4.9%.

"We have achieved tremendous success in some key markets during this period versus the same period last year. Egypt

sales were up 16.5% while Tunisia were up 34.6% and in East Africa volumes went up 32.5%. In Sub-Saharan markets (outside of South Africa and including East Africa) we were up 28.8%."

To keep momentum going on the sales front, Spangenberg said GM will continue to bring outstanding products to market. "Over the next 12 months, we will be launching ten new vehicles into our Africa markets. Of these new vehicles, seven will be launched in the South African market."

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