

Engen finances new school in Burundi

Engen has contributed US\$250,000 towards a new school that has been built in Cibitoke Province, Burundi. The school was presented to Burundi's people at a ceremony recently attended by the president of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza and the governor of Cibitoke Province, Nsabimana Anselme.



Also present at the function were several members of the Burundi parliament and senate, as well as business people. Presided over by Engen Petroleum Burundi chairman of the board of directors, Prosper Turimuci, the handover of the Cibitoke School came three months ahead of the start of the Burundian school year. This is in time for the planning of its integration into the Burundian Education Department's property portfolio.

School details

Engen financed the building of two school blocks with four classrooms each, with an optimal capacity of 20 students per classroom, as well as an ablution facility and office.

The school, situated at the common border of Burundi, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo is planned to be a regional secondary education centre of reference oriented to sciences and technologies.

The sandbag construction of the structure has thermal properties said to be far superior to bricks and mortar, allowing for temperatures inside the building to be at least five degrees below ambient outside temperature. Local residents were up-skilled in the construction process, and the bulk of the works was performed by them.

In his address, President Nkurunziza praised the contribution of Engen as a partner in education in Burundi especially in Cibitoke province, which is one of the country's most under-equipped regions in terms of education.

Introducing construction technology

The president added that Engen had not only contributed financially, but had introduced to the country and the local population a new technology in construction at a time when there is a need for use of local materials and more ecological methods of construction. He also recommended a special training session to be organised to promote this new technology in several government projects countrywide.

Across the 21 African countries in which the company operates, it focuses by far the most of its social spending on education - as much as 60% of its corporate social investment budget.

"The educational initiatives that we have financed and supported for more than 20 years include intensive extra tuition in priority subjects, including Maths and Science, the building of schools and food and transport programmes," says Khanyisa Balfour, Engen corporate social investment manager. "Our programmes have enjoyed tremendous and enduring success, with many pupils from the schools where we've played a supporting role going on to obtain university degrees and even end up as Engen employees."

Second phase

A second phase of building was also launched by the president at the handover, with building expected to commence as soon as possible. The additional blocks envisaged will qualify the school as a national-level secondary boarding school.

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