

Opening of groundbreaking and innovative steel developed school in Mamelodi

On 12 November 2010, ArcelorMittal South Africa officially handed over an ultra-modern school to the Department of Basic Education in a drive to assist in the enhancement of educational facilities in South Africa.

Themba Hlengani

The innovative steel-constructed Meetse-a-Bophelo ('waters of life') Primary School in Mamelodi, east of Pretoria, which was built in just 12 months instead of the normal two years required for a conventional brick and mortar structure, will make a major contribution to the education challenges in the Mamelodi region.

"This new school demonstrates that using our unique steel fabrication techniques, we are able to provide an ultra-modern and comfortable learning environment in even the most remote locations," said Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita, Chief Executive Officer of ArcelorMittal South Africa, who handed over the school to the Department of Basic Education.

In her speech, Ms Nyembezi-

Heita reiterated to Ms Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, who officially opened the school, that the ArcelorMittal South Africa Foundation has committed R250 million to build more schools in partnership with the department.

"As a company with a long history in South Africa, we are thrilled at the opening of this magnificent school. We know that a good grounding at primary school is crucial to long term success in education and we believe that this school will encourage young learners to do their very best".

"It is extremely gratifying that our company is able to use its technology and expertise to promote education, which is central to fighting poverty, joblessness and crime. Indeed, 80% of the Foundation's annual budget is directed toward education projects."

"Our efforts to assist in educating

our nation also includes about R15 million a year we spend on science centres near our operating facilities in Saldanha and Sebokeng, with yet another to be built in Newcastle shortly," added Ms Nyembezi-Heita.

"It makes me equally proud to announce that 38 pupils from our Science Centre are now studying towards engineering degrees or diplomas through ArcelorMittal South Africa's bursary scheme". The aim of providing bursaries to talented students was to enable the company to have first call on highly skilled graduates who are in great demand. The company was also aware that improving maths and science skills in historically disadvantaged areas would benefit the entire economy.

The school, which recently won the Community Development category of South Africa's 2010 Steel Awards, boasts features such as a triangular winged

shape, which makes the most of the north facing classrooms by allowing ample natural light to pass through windows that can be opened just below the sloping ceiling line. The classrooms' natural ventilation regulates temperature, making summers cooler and helping retain heat for colder winter temperatures.

Ms Nyembezi-Heita also paid tribute to corporate donors T-Systems and GEA Aircooled Systems, who provided furniture and laboratory equipment the School.

Mardia van der Walt-Korsten, Managing Director of T-Systems said: "We believe that by providing the opportunity for young people to build their IT skills, T-Systems is fulfilling its commitment to bridging the digital divide, thereby creating a new generation of employable IT experts."

ArcelorMittal South Africa Foundation has set aside R250 million to build innovative steel dominated structure schools in the coming six years. These will be built in areas identified jointly with the Department of Basic Education.

The next two schools are earmarked for the Eastern Cape. They are going to be constructed in areas currently dominated by unstable mud schools.

The steel structure school can be produced in kit form with the benefit of no-fuss assembly wherever the need arises to educate people in communities.

ArcelorMittal South Africa Foundation spends 80% of its annual budget on educational projects, including the running of science centres in Sebokeng (Sedibeng Municipality), Saldanha (Western Cape) and soon – Newcastle in KwaZulu Natal.

