

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **GAMA 2012 - Engineering as a driver of sustainable social and economic development**

Representatives from Consulting Engineers South Africa (CESA) recently attended the 19<sup>th</sup> Group of African Member Associations (GAMA) Conference held in Livingstone at the Zambezi Sun adjoining the spectacular Victoria Falls. GAMA is the African chapter of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) and aspires to become the knowledge platform to further sustainable development on the continent.

Graham Pirie, CEO of CESA, commented, "It was the most successful conference in GAMA's 20-year history, attended by just under 200 delegates and 50 partners." 15 Member Associations from across the African continent attended the event. Pirie believes that FIDIC and GAMA still have a lot of work to do to increase membership, in order to fully represent the 54 countries in Africa. The theme for the conference was **"Engineering as a driver of sustainable social and economic development"**. This in view of the fact that progress in attaining the targets set in terms of the Millennium Development Goals has been very slow and throughout the conference, there was frequent reference to the need for capacity building and the promotion of local (indigenous skills) or regional skills and for multi-nationals to work in partnership with local entities.

Statistics emanating from the FIDIC's State of the World Report 2009 include: Africa's population growth rate was 26% in the past decade, in 2050 Africa could be three times the size of Europe and 75% the size of Asia. By 2015, Nigeria's population, if current trends persist, will be greater than that of the USA. South Africa's carbon emissions are greater than that of the UK. The 2012 version of this report will be released at the FIDIC Conference in Seoul in September and is likely to present some more frightening statistics. The main challenge is to increase Africa's rate of economic growth and improve quality of life in a sustainable manner so Engineers have a lot of hard work to do and are increasingly presented with more and more opportunities to share in Africa's challenges. A paper presented by CESA Past President, Zulch Lötter, entitled "What do I, as a Consulting Engineer, do differently tomorrow morning to ensure sustainable development?" provided a practical dissertation on how to integrate sustainable tools and thinking into the way we do business from an everyday point of view. It is very good news that everybody, including politicians are talking Infrastructure delivery as well as operations and maintenance of projects over their life cycle.

There were a number of CESA speakers, as well as speakers from The World Bank, African Development Bank and FIDIC. The GAMA Conference proved to be a wonderful networking forum, particularly for work north of our border. Pirie states, "There were many similarities in the information shared and it was really good to see African Member Associations uplifting themselves, becoming more professional and adding dedicated in-house capacity to ensure improved service to members." The conference papers are available under GAMA on the FIDIC website, [www.fidic.org](http://www.fidic.org). Next year's conference will be held in Khartoum.

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