

Increasing Production of Affordable Drugs

JSE-listed pharmaceutical company Cipla Medpro SA recently invested R329m in its manufacturing facility in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

The state-of-the-art facility was officially opened by Pres Jacob Zuma.

"We inherited the outdated facility from another pharmaceutical group and because Cipla strives for excellence, it was obvious we had to upgrade," stated Jerome Smith, CEO, Cipla Medpro SA.

Now compliant to the international Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme and Medicine Control Council of SA's standards, Cipla Medpro Manufacturing

(CMM) is also hailed as one of SA's largest manufacturing facilities and one of two facilities producing effervescent formulations.

Cipla has 46 manufacturing facilities worldwide and it was only logical that the fourth largest pharmaceutical company in SA should have a local satellite manufacturing facility.

"This facility will now allow us to gradually diversify the range of medicines we produce locally, as technological transfer occurs across Cipla," said Smith.

Cipla Medpro SA distributes medicines across various therapeutic classes.

"We are large contributors of asthma medication in SA, being the market leader in nasal corticosteroid sprays," commented Smith.

Cipla's latest preventer, Sereflo, was launched at a price way below the innovator.

CMM in Durban currently manufactures three ARVs, Alkafizz, Gelacid and a number of other products.

The intention is to add more and more in the coming months.

Financial growth and expansion expected

The upgraded facility is expected to significantly increase the company's manufacturing capacity in SA. According to *Business Day*, the annual capacity of the facility is two billion tablets and capsules, 19.4 million blister strips, 20.7 million foil strips, 200 000kg of powered medications and 15 million sachets.

Cipla Medpro SA intends to extend its global footprint by expanding its operations into other African countries, such as Nigeria. Partners in Ireland and Turkey have already been secured.



The facility has an increased capacity to produce more tablets

Cipla India an excellent partner

Cipla India is the largest stand-alone generic company in the world and the leading pharmaceutical company in India. Cipla Medpro SA has access to its pipeline of products, technologies, intellectual property and skills.

"They have cutting-edge manufacturing capabilities, so we welcome the prospect of Cipla India eventually acquiring a 25% stake in our manufacturing facility in Durban, which will undoubtedly increase our manufacturing capacity and add value to the ARV tender," said Smith.

This relationship will further assist Cipla Medpro SA to achieve the World Health Organization's and Food and Drug Administration's approvals.



Jerome Smith, CEO of Cipla Medpro SA and Pres Jacob Zuma at the opening of the upgraded manufacturing facility in Durban

Committed to Giving Back to the Community

Job creation

The upgrading of the manufacturing facility has enabled job creation for approximately 400 people. "This is one of the reasons that we motivated for a facility like this in SA," stated Jerome Smith, CEO, Cipla Medpro SA.



CMM provides more jobs

Donations

Besides its involvement in projects such as 'Miles for Smiles' and other educational projects in townships, including Mlazi, Cipla Medpro SA has aligned itself with Pres Zuma's goals and stance on education.

"We have donated R1.5m to the Jacob G Zuma RDP Educational Trust. Pres Zuma is extremely passionate about



(From L-R) Skhumbuzo Ngozwana, deputy CEO of Cipla Medpro SA; S'bu Luthuli, chairperson of Cipla Medpro SA; Mark Daly, financial director of Cipla Medpro SA; Toks van der Linde, ex-Springbok rugby player and an executive to the Cipla CEO; Jerome Smith, CEO of Cipla Medpro SA



Jerome Smith, CEO of JSE-listed pharmaceutical firm Cipla Medpro SA (seated in centre), with President Jacob Zuma (right) and Nokuthula Ngubane, CEO of the Jacob G Zuma RDP Education Trust, at the announcement of the firm's donation to the trust during the opening of the Cipla Medpro manufacturing plant in Durban. Standing from left to right: Sandile Zungu, non-executive director; Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, KZN Health MEC; Sizwe Shezi, chairman of the Trust; and S'bu Luthuli, chairman of Cipla Medpro SA

education and we concur that SA can only grow as a country if more people are educated," stated Smith. "We want to contribute to the success of SA by focusing particularly on tertiary education in the scientific fields of engineering, medicine and pharmacy."

The company will also offer in-service training for graduates to obtain valuable experience.

Increasing access to cheaper medicines

Should CMM secure a good portion of the tender for ARV production, the cost implications would be hugely beneficial in increasing access to the drugs.

"A core principle of the company is a belief that affordable



(From L-R) S'bu Luthuli, chairperson of Cipla Medpro SA; Nokuthula Ngubane, CEO of the Jacob G Zuma RDP Education Trust; President Jacob Zuma; Sizwe Shezi, chairperson of the Jacob G Zuma RDP Education Trust; and Jerome Smith, CEO of Cipla Medpro SA

health care is a right for all South Africans, and not a privilege. Therefore, we are firmly committed to providing world class, yet affordable medicines to all," asserted S'bu Luthuli, chairperson, Cipla Medpro SA. This sentiment was repeated by Smith, who added that strong alliances would ensure a significant increase in low-cost, effective, quality medicines, thereby increasing the quality of life of those afflicted with ill-health.

Thanking All Health Professionals



Jerome Smith, Cipla Medpro SA CEO

I would like to thank all the pharmacists, doctors and other partners in the country, who helped us to become the fourth largest pharmaceutical company in SA. Many patients cannot afford the exorbitant expense of important medicines, and we are committed to producing good quality affordable medicines - that's my philosophy! We are determined to uphold our slogan, 'We will make it better', and we commit ourselves to excellence in whatever we do.

