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South Africa: a major development

press release



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Air Liquide in South Africa

Having started its business in South Africa in **1948**, Air Liquide now operates, with more than **700 employees**, in the industrial gases (mainly steel, automobile, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, and glass), engineering and construction, and healthcare markets. The main facilities are based in the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape regions.

Air Liquide in Sub-Saharan Africa operates in 20 countries and employs a total of 1,500 people.

The Large Industries Business Line of the Air Liquide Group

offers **gas and energy solutions** that improve process efficiency and help achieve greater respect for the environment, mainly in the **refining and natural gas, chemicals, metals and energy** markets. 2010 revenues were **€4,019 million**.

South Africa is a country with vast natural resources and a growing infrastructure. Air Liquide has been an industrial partner of this country for more than 50 years.

Air Liquide has just signed a major long-term contract with Evraz Highveld Steel and Vanadium, the second-largest steel producer in South Africa.

Investment in a **new Air Separation Unit (ASU)** with a capacity of **770 tonnes of oxygen per day**, expected to be commissioned at the **end of 2013**, will ensure the supply of oxygen. The use of this gas helps to improve steelworks productivity and energy performance whilst reducing atmospheric emissions.

This new ASU will also produce liquid oxygen, nitrogen, and argon **to meet growing demand from South Africa's industrial merchant market.**

The facility will be designed and manufactured by Air Liquide Engineering & Construction teams using the **Group's latest technologies, which offer high levels of energy efficiency and reliability.**

The overall investment amounts to around €40 million.

This investment follows investments in a new ASU in KwaZulu-Natal and in Africa's largest argon production unit, both commissioned in 2011.

Pierre Dufour, Senior Executive Vice-President of the Air Liquide Group supervising the Africa and Middle East Zone, said: ***"This contract is a another milestone for the Group in South Africa as it represents a major improvement in our position in a growing market. Air Liquide is the fastest growing player in Southern Africa and this will also allow us to expand our footprint in the Sub-Saharan zone. Developing economies are one of the Group's growth drivers."***

Mike Garcia, CEO of Evraz Highveld Steel and Vanadium, commented: ***"We are delighted to partner with Air Liquide for the supply of oxygen and other gases, which are critical to our processes. Air Liquide brings worldwide experience and we are convinced it will deliver the reliability we require."***

Industrial Merchant activities of Air Liquide

The Industrial Merchant business line manages the production and distribution of **gases in bulk and cylinders**, and provides customers with the applications and services required for their implementation.

Its customers range from tradesmen to major businesses and use **industrial gases** in 5 key sectors: food and pharmaceuticals, automobile and manufacturing, crafts and distribution, materials and energy, and technology and research. For 2010, the Industrial Merchant business line generated **revenue of €4,753 million**.

***Air Liquide is the world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment, and is present in 80 countries with 43,600 employees.** Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen and rare gases have been at the core of Air Liquide's activities since its creation in 1902. Using these molecules, Air Liquide continuously reinvents its business, anticipating the needs of current and future markets. The Group innovates to enable progress, to achieve dynamic growth and a consistent performance.*

***Innovative technologies** that curb polluting emissions, lower industry's energy use, recover and reuse natural resources or develop the energies of tomorrow, such as hydrogen, biofuels or photovoltaic energy... Oxygen for hospitals, homecare, fighting nosocomial infections... Air Liquide combines many products and technologies to develop valuable applications and services not only for its customers but also for society.*

***A partner for the long term**, Air Liquide relies on employee commitment, customer trust and shareholder support to pursue its vision of sustainable, competitive growth. The **diversity** of Air Liquide's teams, businesses, markets and geographic presence provides a solid and sustainable base for its development and strengthens its ability to push back its own limits, conquer new territories and build its future.*

***Air Liquide explores the best that air can offer to preserve life, staying true to its sustainable development approach.** In 2010, the Group's revenues amounted to **€13.5 billion**, of which more than 80% were generated outside France. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris Euronext stock exchange (compartment A) and is a member of the CAC 40 and Dow Jones Euro Stoxx 50 indexes.*