

Turnall to upgrade Bulawayo, Harare plants, create more jobs



Turnall Holdings Managing Director Ms Roselline Chisveto addresses workers at the company's 75th anniversary celebrations in Bulawayo yesterday.

Oliver Kazunga, Senior Business Reporter

LISTED roofing and building products manufacturer, Turnall Holdings Limited, plans to embark on plant upgrade at its factories in Bulawayo and Harare to boost capacity utilisation levels and create more jobs.

Turnall managing director Ms Roselline Chisveto said this in an interview at the Bulawayo factory yesterday after celebrations to mark the company's 75 years of existence.

“Our plans for upgrade are starting this year and we are looking at about \$300 000 for us to actually start upgrading our machines at Bulawayo and Harare factories. The Bulawayo plant is currently operating at 63 percent while Harare is at 48 percent.

“And our view is that from our current level of operations as we move into next year after the upgrades, we should be able to move our output and capacity utilisation levels to around 100 percent,” she said.

Ms Chisveto said improved capacity utilisation level at Turnall was dependent on plant upgrade, availability of raw materials and demand for their products on the market because the company was into pull manufacturing, which seeks to eliminate overproduction.

Commenting on how her organisation has managed to remain afloat given the harsh economic climate Zimbabwe experienced for close to a decade, Ms Chisveto said:

“What we have been doing in the past has just been the supply of maintenance spares and consolidating consumables just to sustain our production run.

“From this year into next year that’s when we are actually beginning to upgrade as well as looking into Capex (Capital expenditure). For capital expenditure we are looking at a budget above \$500 000.”

She said in Harare the manufacturing concern was presently operating a much newer concrete tiles-making machine that has improved their output.

Ms Chisveto said given the challenges that affected Turnall, the manufacturing concern’s focus was to continuously sustain the supply of raw materials. In April, the roofing and building products producer was reported to have concluded payment arrangements with key creditors it owed \$29 million in both current and non-current liabilities.

The deal was envisaged to go a long way in restructuring the company’s capital structure. The firm is also looking at penetrating the regional export market eyeing countries such as Zambia, South Africa and Botswana.

“We are into manufacturing, so our focus is really on production processes to make sure that at any given point we are increasing our capacity utilisation and volumes in terms of output.

“So, the focus has also been on making sure that the supply of raw materials is sustainable so that we are not seen experiencing down times and plant stoppages, which are really unnecessary. We have also been focusing on technology to make sure that our plant and equipment are maintained,” Ms Chisveto said.

In this light, she said, the organisation’s maintenance schedule was focused on the supply of spares and retooling the factories in Harare and Bulawayo.

“We have also looked at our employees to make sure that at any given point we have better and sharper skills because with it also comes improved technology, so we have also visited other plants where we are trying to benchmark in terms of technology to improve our efficiencies.”

Turnall Holdings has also embarked on a cost containment initiative challenging its branches to justify their budgets as well as understanding the rate of return on investments.

“So, from that perspective, cost containment measures have really been key in terms of aligning costs to the capacity of the business. And from that perspective, we have managed to get our head above the water against the challenges that every (macro-economic challenges) other company has been facing in the industry,” said Ms Chisveto. — @okazunga.