

RACECA Seeks Media Support for Local Construction Industry

The professional association which serves to regulate its members and lobby for them got rewarded for its efforts when Joseph Schwartzman was appointed to represent it on the newly inaugurated National Construction Authority's Board of Directors. Through him, RACECA will have a voice in the national construction regulatory agency. Media, argues the Association, should strive to get facts right and avoid publishing misleading reports that undermine the professionalism and the contribution of local contractors to the industry.

RACECA expresses its disappointment that some sections of the Kenya press publish articles which undermine the Kenyan construction industry. Often, this is in favor of contractors from outside the country who are subsidized by their governments, making it impossible for Kenyan contractors to compete fairly

for work they are involved in. These articles, argues the Association, project a false perception of the Kenyan Roads and Civil Engineering Construction Industry. A recent article in a national newspaper stated that "Kenya does not have local capacity to carry out important road improvement projects and local contractors cannot be trusted to adhere to

best practice without cutting corners¹. This is entirely untrue in respect of RACECA Members all of whom have a proven track record which demonstrates their ability to undertake important civil engineering, road construction and road improvement projects and to maintain the highest professional standards.

It is against this background that RACECA is grateful to Construction News magazine for providing a platform through which to inform stakeholders in the construction industry and the public about the progress and activities of the Association. Previous editions of Construction News have emphasized the importance of improving the Kenyan road network in line with the letter and spirit of the Vision 2030 development blue print. The main objective of RACECA is to ensure that in line with the improvement in the Kenyan road network there is a commensurate development of the Kenyan roads and civil engineering construction industry.

Towards this aspiration, RACECA has sponsored and contributed to infrastructure conferences organized by the Ministry of Roads. It has held meetings with the Ministry of Roads, the Ministry of Finance and the Roads Authorities to resolve issues affecting the construction industry. The

Association is a member of the Kenya Private Sector Alliance, is represented on the Kenya Roads Board Research and Development Committee and has been selected to provide a Member of the National Construction Authority Board under the National Construction Authority Act. RACECA was

represented at the recent 5th Annual National Public Procurement and Disposal Stakeholder Consultative Forum and it features on six pages of the latest edition of the Infrastructure Directory Published by the Ministry of Roads.

The Association membership grows year on year and represents over 40 of the leading local and international roads and civil engineering contractors operating in Kenya. The Executive Committee of the Association meets each month at the Parklands Sports Club where RACECA has sponsored a new Hockey Pavilion for the Club and in which the Club has kindly agreed to permit RACECA to base its secretariat and hold regular committee meetings.

The third Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at Parklands Sports Club on Thursday, 28th June, 2012. The Roads and Civil Engineering Contractors Association has a duty to support both the development of the construction sector in Kenya and the interests of its members.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

The National Construction Authority Act, 2011 was signed into law by President Mwai Kibaki in December 2011. The new law gave the Ministry the legal backing to deal with the rogue contractors who were doing shoddy work. He warned it would no longer be business as usual for blacklisted contractors who were bent on taking advantage of loopholes in the law by registering across ministries once they failed to deliver on projects supervised by other ministries.

The new legal and institutional framework creates National Construction Authority (NCA) with power to oversee and co-ordinate development of the construction industry. The NCA will also accredit and register contractors - both local and foreign - across the country. Names of contractors in good standing will be published twice a year, in January and June. The various classes of contract work include Class A-Build' Works (general building contractor' Class B-Engineering Works, Class C-Electrical Engineering Services, and Class D-Mechanical Engineering Services.

The Act stipulates that the NCA will promote the development of the industry; register contractors; standardize and improve construction techniques and materials; and accredit skilled construction workers and construction site supervisors. The Authority's governing board will comprise members representing professional and other construction-related organizations and a representative of special interest groups©

