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Supply Chain Excellence At Weir Minerals' Kitwe Branch

As Weir Minerals Africa's hub for central and east Africa, the newly upgraded Kitwe facility in Zambia is offering customers world class supply chain efficiency.

The branch officially opened in early 2018 and boasts a state-of-the-art logistics and supply chain management systems to match those at the company's main distribution hub in Alrode near Johannesburg.

"Our Kitwe branch now has a 100% location-controlled warehouse that runs off our enterprise resource planning (ERP) system with Wi-Fi-enabled scanners in place. This has resulted in the achievement of inventory accuracy rates in the high 90s," says Luhann Holtzhausen, Weir Minerals Africa supply chain director. "The technology and technical capacity in this facility enables us to pick and bin items in real time. This will match any other system that customers may have seen globally and is also a benchmark within Zambia."

The new warehouse is all under one roof, with high visibility through natural and artificial lighting, where every product is clearly labelled with bin location and barcodes for easy tracking. Shelving of up to three metres high keeps all items neatly stacked, easy to identify and quick to retrieve.

"The right goods in the right quantity in the right place means that when a customer asks for an item, we know that we have it and can find it without delays," he says.

As part of the company's operation-wide system, the stockholding of the Kitwe warehouse can be viewed in real time by the supply chain management team in Johannesburg. Holtzhausen emphasises the importance of the ERP system's ability to track trends in customer usage in a systematic and methodical manner, to avoid any stock-outs on mine sites. Particularly at remote mines that take time to reach, lack of timeous access to spare parts and equipment can be costly in terms of operational downtime.

“In addition to the high accuracy of our data on warehouse inventory, our systems also give us end-to-end velocity measurement to monitor the flow of goods from receipt at our warehouses to the actual time of delivery at the customer’s location,” he says.

Weir Minerals Africa has 75 stocking locations across the southern and central African region, and ships nearly 100,000 items each year from its main distribution hub in Alrode near Johannesburg.

ZAMBIA PIC 01 : Luhann Holtzhausen, Weir Minerals Africa supply chain director.

ZAMBIA PIC 02 : Weir Minerals Africa's newly upgraded facility in Kitwe, Zambia.

ZAMBIA PIC 03 : The new warehouse under one roof with high visibility through natural and artificial lighting.

ZAMBIA PIC 04 : Shelving layout ensures all items are neatly stacked and easy to identify.

ZAMBIA PIC 05 : The technology capacity means items can be picked and binned in real time.

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FROM : CORALYNNE & ASSOCIATES
TEL : +79 523 7422
EMAIL : communicate@coralynne.co.za
WEBSITE: www.coralynne.co.za

FOR : RAJEN GOVENDER
WEIR MINERALS AFRICA (PTY) LTD
TEL : +27 011 929 2701
EMAIL : rajen.govender@mail.weir
WEBSITE: www.minerals.weir